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THE BATTLE FOR MOSCOW, 1941: THE SOVIET VIEW

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE BATTLE FOR MOSCOW, 1941: THE SOVIET VIEW submitted by KEITH ERICK NEILSON in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in HISTORY.

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To my wife Joan, without whose love and encouragement this work would not have been accomplished.

ABSTRACT

In the Soviet Union there is a close relationship between the needs of current policies and the writing of history. The need to justify political decisions has resulted in a continual revision of past history in order to bring it into line with present policies. The history of the battle for Moscow has been affected sharply by the exigencies of the Soviet polical scene during the past thirty years. Until Stalin's death in 1953, the battle was treated in cursory fashion in Soviet publications in order not to reveal Stalin's blunders in 1941. Upon his death, the Soviet military forced a re-examination of the history of the battle, especially of the importance of the factor of surprise, in order to make it compatible with the stratgic needs of the nuclear age. Under Khrushchev, the battle of Moscow tended to be relegated to a subordinate role to the battles of Stalingrad, where Khrushchev himself was active, a move designed to strengthen Khrushchev's claim to political leadership. This irritated those military figures who were prominent in the Supreme High Command and upon Khrushchev's ouster in 1964, they obtained a revision of the treatment accorded the battle for Moscow under Khrushchev. However, these new accounts tended to be somewhat critical of Stalin, and therefore, as the Party was attempting to rehabilitate the image of the former CPSU chief in order to end criticism of the present Soviet regime, during the past six years a new view of the battle for Moscow, more sympathetic to Stalin, has arisen.

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INTRODUCTION

THE SHAPE OF THE PROBLEM

"Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow."

"The Hollow Men",
T.S. Eliot.

While the Great Patriotic War was a very significant event in the history of the Soviet Union, until the past fifteen years it has not received the historical notice commensurate with its importance within the Soviet Union itself. The number and quality of historical works devoted to the Great Patriotic War has fluctuated sharply in the past thirty years. The reasons for this fluctuation, with particular regard to the battle for Moscow, along with an examination of the relationship between the vagaries of Soviet politics and the kind of treatment accorded the battle, provide the central theme of this work.[1] In such histories of the Great Patriotic War as have been written, the battle for Moscow has received far less notice than would be expected of an event which has been described, along with the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk-Orel, as one of the three decisive battles of the war.[2] The reasons for the slighting of the Great Patriotic War in general

[1]There are some very good works which provide an introduction to the problems inherent in the study of Soviet historiography. Perhaps the best of these is Cyril E. Black ed., *Rewritting Russian History* (2nd rev. ed.: New York: Vintage Books, 1962). Also very helpful are Konstantin F. Shteppa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962); Nancy W. Heer, *Politics and History in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971); and John Keep, ed. *Contemporary History in the Soviet Mirror* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964). The specific issue of the historiography of the Great Patriotic War is examined in Matthew P. Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963). Also very helpful is Seweryn Bialer, ed. *Stalin and His Generals* (London: Souvenir Press, 1970), which provides an interesting collection of excerpts from Soviet historical writings concerning the war, illustrating the changing nature of Soviet historical interpretation. This latter work is especially valuable for its insightful introductions to each chapter and for the notes, compiled by the editor, which illuminate obscure points and provide useful comment.

[2]Bialer, *Stalin and His Generals*, p. 265, notes that "the battles

and the battle of Moscow in particular in Soviet histories are complex and stem from the close relationship which exists between politcs and the writing of history in the Soviet Union.

This relationship grows out of two factors. First, as Marxist doctrine is based on historical analysis and as polemics based on this kind of interpretation have long been a favourite weapon of Bolshevik leaders from Lenin to the present, there is a long traditon of and ideological basis for the close association of history and politics in Soviet minds. Second, history in any society tends to reflect the attitudes of that society and is thus an important means of shaping social and political attitudes. As a recent commentator points out,

> . . . historiography functions in any political system to socialize the coming generation, to legitimate political institutions, to perpetuate established mores and mythology and to rationalize official policies.[3]

Therefore, in a highly centralized society like the Soviet Union, where political decisions are made from the top of the governmental pyramid, it is only natural that history is utilized to suit the present needs and aims of the ruling faction.

The Party influences historical writing by several means, one of the most important theoretical buttresses of which is the concept of *partiinost'* as applied to both literary and technical works.[4] *Partiinost'*

that are most commonly mentioned in this regard [as decisive] are the Battle of Moscow . . . the Battle of Stalingrad . . . and the Battle of Kursk-Orel . . . ".

[3]Heer, *History and Politics*, p. *vii*.

[4]A full discussion of *partiinost'* and of Soviet literary controls in general can be found in Robert M. Hankin, "Main Premises of the Communist Party in the Theory of Soviet Literary Controls," *Continuity and change in Russian and Soviet Thought*, ed. by E. J. Simmons

obligates the Soviet writer to observe two essentials in all aspects of his work: the ". . . volitional identification with the proletarian cause . . . " and, ". . . conformity with the operation of historical laws."[5] It is the identfication of these two essentials which is the province of the CPSU. After this identification has been mades, in theory by the application of the immutable principles of Marxism, these decisions are passed on to the historians who are charged by the Party to translate them into practical historical accounts.

In addition to the restrictions created by the concept of *partiinost'*, there also exist more tangible controls upon the Soviet historian. Like all facets of Soviet life, the writing of history is subject to the twin forces of the Party and the State.[6] State control of the historian ultimately resides with the Council of Ministers acting through a variety of committees and Ministries. Perhaps the most effective means of control results from the strictures placed upon the use and publication of documentary material. This control resides in two distinct bodies: the Main Archival Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for those materials dealing with domestic affairs and the Archive Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for those documents concerning foreign policy. Control of the direction of research also arises from the State Committee for Coordination of Scien-

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 433-50.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 447.

[6] Heer, *Politics and History*, pp. 34-59, outlines the structure of the means of control which act upon the writing of Soviet history and provides the factual basis of the following discussion.

tific Research, a body directly responsible to the Council of Ministers at an all-union level. Furthermore, like all other publications, historical works are subject to censorship. This censorship is undertaken by the Main Administration for Guarding Military and State Secrets in Publications, a body better known by its Russian acronym of *Glavlit*.

Still within the State sphere of influence, there are several other means of control which exist. The USSR Academy of Sciences, as well as each major university, falls under the control of the Council of Ministers. Within the Academy of Sciences exist two important divisions, the Department of Social Sciences with its Section on Historical Sciences and its separate research body, the Institute of History. These latter two divisions are the source of two major Soviet historical journals, *Voprosy istorii* and *Istoriia SSSR* respectively. Between these two divisions and their respective journals there is constant disagreement, reflecting the realization of the Party that even in the Soviet Union inevitably there are conflicting views on most topics, within the limits prescribed by the Party. In such fashion, controversy is channeled into official paths, avoiding the dangers which arise under total repression.

Within the Party structure itself, the primary means of control of historical work are the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee, the All-Union Council on Coordination of Scientific Research on the History of the CPSU, and the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee. The first of these bodies, the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, is the primary means of Party control and is run directly by

the Central Committee at an all-union level. The second, the All-Union Council, was created in 1962 and serves to control the coordinating councils in all union republics. The last mentioned body, the Academy of Social Sciences, has the delicate task of training Party historians. In addition to the three previously mentioned bodies, the Party exercises its control historical writing through two departments of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, Agitation and Propaganda (*Agitprop*) and Culture and Science. These two departments are involved in the supervision of ideological work and its mass dissemination, with the Department of Culture and Science functioning at a policy-making level, providing the practical guidelines for the writing out of the theoretical pronouncements of the Party.

The effect of these myriad means of control on the writing of history in the Soviet Union is quite profound. Since the Party interpretation of Marxism tends to reflect the current needs of political expediency, there is a constant revision of previously held convictions to fit present needs. Indeed, it is tempting to accept the view advanced by one writer argues "to a considerable degree, all Soviet historiography is a projection into the past of the political line current when the histories are written."[7] The danger of this view is, however, that it tends to be simplistic, regarding Soviet society as a monolith, with Party directives being issued on every matter of importance and being obeyed without question.

[7]John A. Armstrong, "Recent Soviet Publications on World War II," *Slavic Review*, XXI, No. 3 (September, 1962), p. 509.

Such an approach does not appear to be particularly productive, for it reduces a complex society to a primitive stimulus and response organism devoid of dissenting parts. In practice it seems of more practical and heuristic value to view Soviet historiography as does K. F. Shteppa, who sees it as a "microcosm in a macrocosm", with the small field of Soviet history reflecting the intricacies of the larger political system.[8] Working from such an assumption, the interpretation of Soviet historical works becomes a window into the closed room of the Soviet polity and gives a glimpse of the diversity of official intellectual thought in the Soviet Union. Therefore, Soviet historical works provide two services to Western student: they provide genuine scholarly contributions, albeit with the prescribed confines of the current official guidelines, and they yield valuable information concerning the current political attitudes and policies in the Soviet Union.

Within the broad framework of the political control of historiography in the Soviet Union as outlined above, there exist smaller demesnes each with its own specialized problems. The study of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 contains within it certain issues which are unique in historical studies in the Soviet Union. One of the major reasons for the unique position of studies involving the war is the central position which the event itself holds in the minds of the Soviet citizenry. Thus, the history of the war is one of the few issues which can create a groundswell of popular opinion, and therefore must be treated with caution and restraint.

Further, the Great Patriotic War is important to the Soviet state

[8]Shteppa, *Russian Historians*, p. 380.

due to its significance as a myth. Myths play a role in politics out of proportion to the importance of the incidents which inspired them. As Thomas Szasz remarks ". . . . myth . . . functions as justificatory imagery and rhetoric for both the group and the individual . . . ".[9] In such a fashion the war is used in the Soviet Union as the ultimate justification for the Bolshevik regime, its policies, and its achievements. The war provides an *ex post facto* rationale for the five year plans, for collectivization, for the labour camps, and to some extent for the purges and trials of the 'thirties. The advent of war was the final evidence for the necessity of strengthening, by any means, the State, and victory was the final proof of the efficacy of these policies. The myth, once created, has a vitality which transcends reality, and any negative tampering with it results in an overall lessening of the prestige of the Soviet state. Again, such a potent psychological situation must receive the most circumspect treatment.

Besides this significant psychological aspect of the war and its treatment, the writing of history concerning the struggle is complicated by the prominent position of Stalin in the war and sensitive position he occupies in Soviet historiography. Once a subject fit only for hagiography, Stalin and Stalinism have become a much discussed issue in Soviet historical debate.[10] Stalin's position as Commander-in-

[9]Thomas S. Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1970), p. 120.

[10]A recent example of the trend to examine Stalin in a historical light can be seen in Roy A. Medvedev, *K sudu istorii (genezis i posledstviia Stalinizma)* (A Study of History: The Genesis and Aftermath of Stalinism), (Moscow: Samizdat, 1968). This work and the role of

Chief of the Soviet armed forces, coupled with coeval occupation of the First Secretaryship of the Party, inextricably links theconduct of the war with a consideration of the past performance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

Thus, given the emotional significance of the war, any re-evaluation of the role played by Stalin is certain to creat emotional currents which could then redound upon the Party in its other functions. Any attempt by Party theoreticians to circumvent the problems caused by the connection between Stalin and the conduct of the war by attempting to separate the actions of Stalin from those of the CPSU, founders upon the insistence of the Party that its rule in the Soviet Union has been continuous since 1917. As Stalin's was essentially a one-man rule, then the view held by the CPSU concerning its continuous control of the Soviet Union must either be considered a fiction or the Party must accept responsibility for and participation in Stalin's decisions. Therefore, it is impossible to separate Stalin's role from that of the Party for the period of the war, and thus any evaluation of Stalin in his capacity as war leader is influenced by his special relationship to the Party and to its history.

Further, the problems thus engendered in the writing of military history by the close relationship of the Party to all official policy is especially evident in matters concerning military strategy. In this context, the initial failures of the Soviet armed forces to check the

Stalin in contemporary Soviet histories are discussed in Robert M. Slusser, "A Soviet Historian Evaluates Stalin's Role in History," *American Historical Review*, LXXVII, No. 5 (December, 1972), pp. 1389-98.

German invaders in the initial stages of the war is particularly fascinating.[11] Since prewar Soviet strategy was, of necessity, that of the Party,[12] failure must be explained in some fashion which does not throw the burden of guilt upon the Party. Attempts to do so have led to serious distortions in Soviet histories of the wartime period. In some, the initial failures are dismissed as temporary fluctuations in the flow of the war and not as a result of errors in strategical conception. It was also argued that the strategical approach was valid but was improperly implemented by lazy, inefficient, or incompetent armed forces' personnel. Finally, some attempt was made to separate the role of the Party in the formulation of military strategy from that of Stalin and in so doing admit that prewar strategy was in error. This approach is fraught with the perils mentioned previously concerning the problems inherent in tampering with Stalin's position in history and also raises some questions concerning the CPSU's claim to continuous rule in the USSR, as it would suggest that Stalin made his decisions without the approval of the Party. Each of these sophistries gives rise to distortions in Soviet treatments of the war which must be taken into account if some sort of accurate evaluation is to

[11] Soviet prewar strategy was based on the assumptions found in the *Draft Field Regulations* of 1939. These, in part, stated that "any enemy attack on the Soviet Union will be met by a smashing blow from its armed forces" and went on to add that the Soviet response would quickly become offensive due to the superior will of the Soviet forces and that the victory would be gained at a small cost in blood. As cited in Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941-1945* (London: Barrie & Rockcliff, 1964) p. 133.

[12] This assumption must be made if the idea of the continuous rule of the CPSU is to be accepted as it follows from the preamble of the constitution of the CPSU, which gives to the Party the "leading voice" in all organizations and activities in the Soviet Union.

be established.[13]

In addition to the question of the correctness of prewar Soviet strategy, there is also the need to explain the significance of the factor of surprise in Soviet histories of the Great Patriotic War. As a close examination of the state of Soviet preparedness on the eve of the German invasion reveals the serious shortcomings thereof, it is more convenient for the Party to credit the factor of surprise for the early German successes than to probe for the real causes too deeply. Bearing in mind the fact that the inevitable triumph of the Soviet system is a foregone conclusion in all Soviet histories, the war cannot be discussed as if the outcome were ever in doubt and this, too, makes surprise a convenient scapegoat for the initial failures of the Soviet armed forces. However, since the Soviet victory is assured, this means that the factor of surprise must be one of secondary or transitory importance in order that Soviet victory can come to pass and this creates problems for the Soviet military when they come to assess the lessons

[13]An example of the efforts to circumvent the problems raised by the failure of prewar Soviet military doctrine can be found in Major-General S. Kozlov, "Military Doctrine and Military Science," *Soviet Military Translations* 143, II, No. 2 (May, 1964), pp. 14-24. (A translation of an article from *Kommunist Vooruzhennyk Sil*, No. 5, 1964, pp. 9-15). In this article, Lozlov argues that

> ". . . our military science correctly determined the role of the new weapons for that time [prior to the Great Patriotic War]--aviation and tanks as an essential condition for attaining victory in war (naturally, among other considerations). However, at that time Soviet military doctrine, recognising as correct the conclusions of science on the nature of war could not direct the development of our Armed Forces in complete consistency with these conclusions since the actual economic potential of the nation did not meet all the demands of military theory."

In trying to avoid blaming the Party for the failures of the war, Kozlov attempts to square the circle by shunting the blame on the economic sector, ignoring the fact that the Soviet forces were well equiped with tanks but employed them poorly.

to be gathered from the war. While surprise proved to be only of transitory importance in the Great Patriotic War, to conclude that this is an eternally correct assumption was dubious in the nuclear age. Therefore, there exists a difference between what interpretation of the opening stages of the war is best for the Party and what is best for the military, creating a changing view of this event depending on the amount of influence held by the military at a particular instant.

Another very significant factor in the writing of military history in the Soviet Union is the existence of the Soviet military as an interest group concerned with its own history.[14] Although the tendency of totalitarian parties in general is ". . . to prevent the armed forces from developing a distinct identity of their own . . . ",[15] the Soviet armed forces doe have a unique character, shaped by their Tsarist antecedents and their own experiences, with some easily defined general characteristics. This is not to suggest, of course, that the Soviet armed forces are an homogeneous body, for they contain diverse elements which further serve to complicate the military influence on historiography. Still, certain features are so common that they can be said to

[14]A general discussion of the role of interest groups in Soviet politics is contained in H. Gordon Skilling, "Interest Groups and Communist Politics," *World Politics*, XVIII (April, 1966), pp. 435-51. For an evaluation and discussion of the military as a particular interest group, see Roman Kolkowicz, "Interest Groups in Soviet Politics: The Case of the Military," *Comparative Politics*, II, No. 3 (1970), pp. 445-72. Much of the discussion of the influence and character of the military in its role as an interest group found herein owes its inspiration to Kolkowicz's above mentioned article, as well as to his previous work, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[15]Carl Friedrich and Z. K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship in an Autocracy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1956), p. 281.

be reflected by the entire military apparatus.

The Soviet military is a group whose greatest concerns have been with internal matters and with external affairs which have impinged directly upon the function of the military. The military maintains its position by a variety of means, both official and quasi-official. As in all large, highly bureaucratized institutions, there is a high resistance to change within the military which imparts a conservative lean to the military stance. This tendency to conservatism has been maintained by appeals to those elements within the Party which are sympathetic to the military position--particularly those which have interests in common, such as those concerned with heavy industry--as well as to those military figures who have established strong political positions.

Working within the framework of its position in Soviet society, the military strives to maintain its status as a guild-like profession which patriotically upholds the State. However, the tendency of the military to desire independence of action from the Party and to resent political interference in military matters, combined with its efforts to press for greater autonomy in matters of administrative decision and military doctrine, results in friction between the military and the Party. The Party rebuts the military assertions of the need for greater independence by advancing its own claim to pre-eminence in all aspects of Soviet endeavor, as outlined in the constitution of the CPSU. This argument has been stated in the Party journal *Kommunist* as follows: "The Party . . . cannot leave the armed forces outside its field of vision; leadership of them cannot be outside the control of the Party and of its

Central Committee."[16]

The military's attempts to circumvent the Party's claims have led them to enter the field of history in order to supply historical precedent and justification for the creation of a more autonomous army and to show that military successes have resulted from the independence of the military from Party directives.[17] For such reasons, Soviet military histories published under the auspices of the military establishment and by military figures have a tendency to advance theses reflecting the vested interests of the military interest group. Therefore, military histories as written by this group are unreliable with respect to such matters as the significance of the political officers in maintaining the efficiency of the armed forces, and to the contribution of the Party to the organization and conduct of the war at a command level.

Clearly, then, the study of Soviet historiography and military historiography in particular, is by no means either a simple or a straightforward one. Soviet military history has been shown to be influenced by by many factors: Marxist doctrine; the pervasive interests of the CPSU; the particular biases of individual interest groups; and, although

[16]Unsigned editorial, *"Kommunisticheskaia Partiia--rudovodiashchaia sila sovetskogo obshchestva,"* (Communist Party--Guiding Force of Soviet Society) *Kommunist*, No. 16 (1957), p. 10.

[17]The military influences history primarily through the journals which it controls. One category of these journals is the professional magazines, the most significant of which for the Red Army is *Krasnaia zvezda*, which are designed to provide the higher ranks of the military with a forum for the discussion of military affairs. Military history as such is found in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, founded in 1957 and published by the Ministry of Defence, which prints articles by military historians and by high-ranking military personnel. Through the channel provided by these journals and other similar ones, the military establishment makes its views on military history known to the Party.

this point has not been made previously, by the inevitable vagaries of personal opinion and scholarly debate common to all fields of history in every political system. While the influences of these factors have only been discussed to this point in a general context, attempting to explain the complex nature of the study of Soviet historiography, they are evident as well in the examination of particular instances in Soviet military history.[18]

Having examined the particular relationship between politics and history which exists in the Soviet Union, as well as the problems inherent in the writing of Soviet military history, it is necessary to return to an examination of the battle of Moscow. The battle of Moscow holds a special significance in Soviet military history for two reasons. First, the Soviet victory at Moscow put a finish to the unending string of Nazi successes in Europe and thereby provided new hope for the Soviet people and for their Western European allies. Second, the battle destroyed the pre-invasion German timetable for victory in the East and necessitated subsequent *ad hoc* German planning, an important factor in the German defeat in the East.

While the battle for Moscow thus has an important intrinsic value in any examination of the Great Patriotic War, its chronological loca-

[18]The opening stages of the war provide a point in fact. The examination of the connected questions concerning the lack of Soviet preparedness in June, 1941, and Stalin's culpability for this lack has been a sensitive issue in Soviet historical circles. A great uproar in the Soviet academic world was touched off by the publication of A. M. Nekritch's *22 Iuni, 1941* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1967). The influence of this work and the ensuing historical debate over it have been well analyzed by Vladimir Petrov in *"June 22, 1941", Soviet Historians and the German Invasion* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1968).

tion--immediately following the continuing line of Soviet failures beginning with the invasion of June, 1941--assures it of an important and delicate position in Soviet historiography.[19] It is difficult to discuss the battle for Moscow without at least alluding to the initial disasters and the question of the responsibility for them. This question involves an examination of the role of Stalin as a war leader and the blames to be attached to the military establishment for the early setbacks. As previously discussed, both of these topics are difficult for the Soviet historian to examine objectively due to the political ann military factors which are involved.

Another point of difficulty in Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow is in the conclusions which were drawn from the victory. The question which can be asked is: were the conclusions arrived at, as presented in Soviet military and historical works after the war the result of reasonable, impartial analysis or were they rather apolegetics, formulated to rationalize the preceding defeats? The involvement of the reputations of Stalin, the Party, and the entire military organization in this matter is clear and adds to the tendentiousness of Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow. As well, the fact that two of the out-

[19] While the limits of the time period of the battle for Moscow are not strictly defined, for the purpose of this study the Soviet view as found in the six-volume history of the Great Patriotic War, that

> ". . . the battle for Moscow can be broken down into two parts: the defensive (30 September-5 December, 1941) and the offensive, consisting of the counterblows and of the general offensive of the Red Army in the Western (Moscovite) area (6 December, 1941-20 April, 1942)",

shall be adopted. From *Istoriia Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza 1941-1945 v shesti tomakh* (History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945, in Six Volumes) (Moscow: Voenizdat, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, 1960-1962), II, pp. 207-08.

standing military figures who participated in the battle, Marshals G. K. Zhukov and I. S. Konev, came to dislike each other intensely after the battle for Berlin in 1945 and differ strongly in their postwar evaluation of the battle for Moscow, adds another puzzling element into any examination of the Soviet histories of the battle.

Finally, the fact that so many Western authors, including former German military figures, have discussed the battle for Moscow has made it imperative that Soviet writers refute the claims of these "bourgeois objectivist" scholars.[20] The need to establish the inevitability of the Soviet victory and, concommitantly, to refute the assertion that German mistakes or the weather gave the Soviets the victory has resulted in a fierce historiographical war between Soviet historians and their Western counterparts.[21]

It is clear, then, that the battle for Moscow occupies a critical location in Soviet historiography. Thus, an examination of the shifts in interpretation of the battle will provide insight into the reasons for these fluctuations in the accounts of the battle for Moscow. As well, such an examination will provide a *raison d'être* for the study of history as it is written in the Soviet Union by illustrating how the close re-

[20]"Bourgeois objectivism" has been defined by the Soviets as "an interpretation of the conformity of the historical process designed to justify and immortalize the capitalist system". As noted in Black, *Rewriting Russian History*, p. 27.

[21]See, for example, the opening chapter entitled "Historical Truth and Its Falsificators," in A. M. Samsanov *Velikaia bitva pod Moskvoi. 1941-1942* (Great Battle At Moscow. 1941-1942) (Moscow: Akad. Nauk SSSR, 1958). Alternatively, see S. Z. Golikov, *"O nekotorikh burzhuaznikh falsifikatorakh istorii vtoroi mirovoi voiny,"* (Concerning Several Bourgeois Falsifications of the History of the Second World War) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 1 (1959), pp. 145-58.

lationship between politics and the content of Soviet historical works can be utilized in order to provide an intimate look into the inner workings of the Soviet body politic.

CHAPTER ONE

THE STALIN YEARS

(1941-1953)

His face's lower part is dark
With the moustache's hanging shade.
What words are hidden there from us,
For just a moment's pause delayed?

"To a Portrait of Stalin",
Alexander Tvardovskii.

Because of the controversial nature of Stalin's role in the battle of Moscow, accounts of the Great Patriotic War by Soviet writers necessarily trod warily when dealing with this event until the death of the First Party Secretary in 1953. It is tempting, considering the firm control exercised by the Stalinist state over the whole of the Soviet publishing process, to consider the works published in the entire period from 1941 to 1953 as uniform, with no change in attitude or interpretation. However, in dealing with the battle for Moscow, such an approach is misleading, for the situation is rather more complex. Rather, there were two trends within Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow, sometimes intertwined, but each complete with its own unique characteristics.[1]

The first of these trends was primarily a phenomenon of the wartime period itself, and featured an interpretation of the battle which emphasized three concepts. The partnership of the Soviet people and the Soviet regime against the foreign invaders; the view that the Soviet leadership was reacting to events as they happened, with no overall plan for victory; and an emphasis on the importance of Western aid to

[1]Soviet sources for the battle of Moscow written during the period from 1941 to 1953 can be broadly divided into two categories: the propagandistic and the didactic. In the first category are included those materials intended for public consumption, notably Stalin's wartime speeches and the official histories of the battle written after the war. Due to the fact that these official histories were limited in scope and interpretation by the strictures which Stalin placed on them they tended to be avoided by the professional historians who felt that they were too politically hazardous to consider. Therefore, such works as exist tend to be highly superficial and based on direct quotation from Stalin's pronouncements in lieu of solid research.

The second rough category, the didactic, consists of works published with the utilitarian aim of improving the fighting quality of

the Soviet war effort. Such a candid view arose during the first stages of the battle for Moscow, in the fall of 1941, and continued throughout the war in the face of the Nazi threat. With the end of the war and the elimination of the need to maintain a unified front against the foreign invaders, this first trend in Soviet historiography came to an end, although in military writings it was maintained until 1948 due to the intense professional interest of Soviet military personnel in Western military science engendered by their appreciation of the military strength and competence of their former allies. Even during the war itself, however, events were not interpreted exclusively as outlined above. Beginning in 1942, with the easing of the German threat due to the Soviet victory at Moscow, there arose a second trend in Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow. The new view came to dominate Soviet historiography more and more as Soviet victory in the war became more assured. In the immediate postwar period, with the rise of the Cold War, this trend completely supplanted the earlier one, with the final break occurring in 1948 concommitant with the Berlin crisis. This

the Soviet armed forces, both during and after the war. Such works were designed to provide Soviet officers with lessons gleaned from the experiences of the Soviet armed forces during the war and included the thirteen operational studies published by the General Staff Historical Section under the leadership of then Colonel N. A. Talenskii. As well, there were twenty issues published of the *Sbornik materialov po izucheniiu opyta voiny* (Collection of Materials for the Study of the Experience of the War) published by the General Staff Administration division. As these works were intended to serve as teaching aids for Soviet officers, they were far more objective and candid than those works designed for propaganda purposes. The Soviet sources for the Great Patriotic War are discussed in the excellent bibliographic essay by John T. Greenwood, "Russian Official History in the Twentieth Century", in *Official Histories, Essays and Bibliographies from Around the World*, ed. R. Highan (Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State Library, 1970), pp. 392-401, and especially, for the battle for Moscow, pp. 397-401.

second trend in Soviet historiography emphasized the view that the Soviet losses during the first part of the war and the Soviet counter-blows at Moscow were all part of a preconceived Soviet plan for victory and that this victory was the result of the application of this plan by the Soviet people under the leadership of the Party and government.[2] While it is clear that significant differences between the earlier and later views of the battle for Moscow existed, common to both were certain eternal views.

These unchanging perspectives included an assumption of eventual Soviet victory due to the intrinsic superiority of the socialist society of the Soviet Union, the attribution of the magnitude of the initial German victories to their utilization of the resources of conquered Europe, the chiding of the West for its failure to provide a second front to relieve the pressure on the Soviet Union, and an avoidance of any discussion of certain events, such as the great civilian panic which occurred in Moscow in October of 1941, which would reflect badly on the Communist regime in the Soviet Union. But, these similarities aside, it is necessary to examine each interpretation of the battle for Moscow in greater detail to establish how each was influenced by the needs of the moment.

The treatment accorded the battle for Moscow during the war itself was a clear reflection of the need for national unity in the face

[2]This difference between the two trends in Soviet historiography, with regard to the Soviet view of the entire war, is discussed in Matthew P. Gallagher, *The Soviet History of World War II* (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 37-64.

of the Nazi peril. The tone was set by Stalin himself in his famous speech to the Soviet people on July 3, 1941, which began, "Comrades! Citizens! Brothers and sisters! Men of our army and navy! I am addressing you, my friends!"[3] This unprecedented familiarity was typical of Stalin's exhortations to the Soviet people during the struggles in the war, and lasted until the very end of the conflict. In his November 6, 1941, speech at Moscow, Stalin emphasized this point when he stated: "There can be no doubt that the idea of defense of one's country, for the sake of which our people are fighting, must produce and is actually producing in our army heroes who are cementing the Red Army . . .".[4] In the aftermath of the battle for Moscow, Stalin again alluded to the unity of the Soviet people in the face of foreign aggression, ". . . our front and rear form one indissoluble fighting camp, prepared to surmount all difficulties on our path to victory over the enemy."[5]

As striking as this emphasis on the partnership of the Soviet people and government in the struggle against the fascists was, even more intriguing was the immediate official treatment of the renewed German offensive in the fall of 1941. The launching of the German drive against Moscow on September 30, 1941, was met with little fanfare in the Soviet press, despite Hitler's announcement a few days following,

[3]Joseph Stalin, speech to the Soviet people on the occasion of the German invasion, July 3, 1941, as translated in *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union* (New York: International Publishers, 1945), p. 9.

[4]*Ibid.*, speech on November 6, 1941, p. 23.

[5]*Ibid.*, speech on May Day, 1942, p. 47.

on October 2, that the final drive upon Moscow had begun. Indeed, it was not until October 7 that mention was made in the Soviet press of "heavy fighting in the direction of Viaz'ma."[6] However, by the tenth of October, the seriousness of the danger was admitted, with warnings being given of German agents acting in Moscow itself with an intent to subvert the Soviet rear.[7] By mid-October, there was little attempt to camouflage the peril of the situation as there was the concrete evidence of this danger provided by the evacuation of many government offices from Moscow to Kuibyshev. An official statement, published October 16, stated:

> During the night of October 14-15, the position on the Western Front became worse. The German-Fascist troops hurled against our troops large quantities of tanks and motorized infantry, and in one sector broke through our defenses.[8]

Reports such as these, coupled with the declaration of a state of siege in Moscow on October 19 and the formation of the home defence labour battalions at the same time, made the gravity of the situation evident to the citizens of Moscow and to the Soviet Union as a whole.

In his speech of November 6, 1941, Stalin made no attempt to minimize the dangers then facing the Soviet Union:

> I already stated in one of my speeches at the beginning of the war that the war had created a serious danger for our

[6]As cited in Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941-1945* (London: Barrie & Rockcliff, 1964), p. 233. Werth does an excellent job of portraying the mood in Moscow during the fall of 1941 in this work and in his earlier *Moscow '41* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1942). Unfortunately, this latter work only covers the period until mid-October, 1941, when Werth moved from Moscow to Leningrad.

[7]*Pravda*, October 10, 1941.

[8]As cited in Werth, *Russia at War*, p. 235.

> country, that a serious danger was facing our country, that it was necessary to understand and realize this danger and reorganize our whole work on a war footing.
>
> Today, as a result of four months of war, I must emphasize that this danger--far from diminishing--has on the contrary increased.[9]

Stalin then went on to place the Soviet casualties for the first four months of the war at an estimated 1,748,000, including 350,000 dead.[10] In addition to this admission, Stalin made no effort to conceal the extent of the German advance and with these advances the threat to Moscow and Leningrad.[11] While the news that Moscow and Leningrad were in danger was not new, Stalin's open admission of the fact indicates that there was no attempt to minimize the seriousness of the peril and suggests that he might be preparing the Soviet people for the eventuality that either city might be lost. This tendency to caution was evident in Soviet new releases even when the counterblows at Moscow, beginning on December 5, began to push back the German tide. In a warning against premature celebration, *Pravda* warned that "the enemy is wounded but not dead."[12]

Stalin was no less straightforward then in his explanation of the German sucesses than he had been in his admission of the magnitude

[9]Stalin, *Great Patriotic War*, speech of November 6, 1941, p. 19. This speech was delivered by radio from Moscow on the eve of November 6. The following day Stalin repeated this speech in an abbreviated form in a public address in Red Square, an act which emphasized the determination of the Soviet regime to stand fast before the German invaders.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 20.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 19.

[12]*Pravda*, December 13, 1941.

of the Soviet defeats. The Nazi victories in the opening stages of the Great Patriotic War were the result, Stalin said, of the "perfidious" German attack on the Soviet Union, reiterating the position which he had adopted in his July 3, 1941, speech to the Russian people at the beginning of the war.[13] This approach was echoed in later wartime Soviet histories, for example that of Lieutenant-General E. A. Shilovskii, which mentioned that:

> Fascist Germany, at the beginning of the war, perfidiously launched its military forces against the USSR without declaring war and were thus able to take advantage of the factor of surprise.[14]

This emphasis on the importance of surprise, implicit in Stalin's two speeches and explicit in Shilovskii's account, was an interesting admission in the light of postwar Stalinist denunciations of surprise as a purely temporary factor in warfare of little significance. Its inclusion in Soviet histories of this time reflected the seriousness of the Soviet danger and the rare candour which this danger engendered.

A similar type of admission was made by Stalin concerning the readiness of the Red Army. While prefacing his remarks with a statement that there were certain mitigating factors which in part accounted for its poor showing, Stalin stated that the Soviet ". . . army and navy are still young; . . . they have not yet had time to become

[13]The text of Stalin's July 3, 1941 speech can be found in Stalin, *Great Patriotic War*, pp. 9-17.

[14]Lieutenant-General E. A. Shilovskii, *Razgrom nemetskikh voisk pod Moskvoi* (Destruction of the German Force at Moscow) (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1943), p. 2. This history was one of the thirteen operation studies published under the aegis of the General Staff Historical Section as mentioned above (p. 1n.).

professional in the full sense . . . ".[15] The Germans, in contrast, had in his view ". . . already been waging war for two years",[16] and had the benefit of this actual combat experience. In the light of subsequent Soviet interpretations, this admission of weakness was as surprising as the previously mentioned significance given to the factor of surprise.

Stalin's comments, in his November 6 speech, concerning the significance of the contribution of the Western allies to the Soviet war effort were also very important. Stalin appeared to hold great store by this alliance, for he mentioned ". . . the coalition of the U.S.S.R., Great Britian, and the United States against the German fascist imperialists",[17] as one of the major reasons for the inevitable defeat of the Nazis. Stalin went on to amplify this lauding of the Allied alliance, telling of the decision by the representatives of Great Britain and the United States (respectively Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Harriman) to assist the Soviet Union with supplies of tanks and aircraft.[18] Stalin further mentioned the British attempts to supply the Soviet Union with war material as well as the fact that the United States had granted the Soviet Union a loan of one billion dollars. "Such

[15]Stalin, *Great Patriotic War*, speech of November 6, 1941, p. 23.

[16]*Ibid.*

[17]*Ibid.*, p. 32.

[18]The significance of the Allied attempts to supply the Soviet Union with aircraft and the continuing Soviet-Western historical conflict over this issue are discussed in Richard C. Lucas, "The Impact of 'Barbarossa' on the Soviet Air Force and the Resulting Commitment of United States Aircraft, June-October 1941," *Historian*, XXIX, No. 1 (November), pp. 60-80.

are the factors", noted Stalin, "determining the inevitable death of German fascist imperialism."[19]

Here, then, was one contemporary Soviet reaction to the battle for Moscow. The success of the German advance was a result of the momentum gained by the perifidous instigation of war via a surprise attack. This, combined with the inexperience of the Red Army, produced the dangerous situation at Moscow, a situation which could only be resolved by the combined effort of the Soviet people and government working in concert. And, while defeat of the Hitlerite masses was inevitable, even the successes of the Soviet counterblows of December were qualified by the admonition not to discount the German threat too soon. A third point in this litany of the immediate Soviet reaction to the battle was the significance given to the coalition between the USSR and her Western allies, Great Britain and the United States. The reasons for this interpretation of the battle for Moscow are not clear; however, there are certain factors which must have influenced Stalin's decisions. To attribute the German successes to momentum and experience removed much of the stigma from the Red Army for its poor showing. Rather than put the blame on prewar Soviet strategy or on poor Soviet leadership, both of which would reflect badly on Stalin himself, it was far more convenient to suggest that German perfidy was the culprit. In such fashion, a close examination of Stalin's failure to take account of the ample warnings of the German invasion with which he was provided could be avoided. Similarly, by blaming German perfidy, Stalin could avoid

[19]Stalin, *Great Patriotic War*, speech of November 6, 1941, p. 33.

any analysis which might question why he was so little in the public eye immediately following the German invasion and raise the question of what his role was in this crucial period.[20] The reasoning behind the call for unity between the Soviet people and government and for the gratitude expressed towards the Soviet Union's allies was obvious. The situation during the battle for Moscow was so grave as to warrant any and all moves which would increase the capacity to resist the German invaders. The need for all possible aid from the Allies was so acute that Stalin even asked the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, for a British expeditionary force of some twenty-five to thirty divisions to aid the beleagured Soviet forces.[21]

However, Stalin, ever wise to the significance of history in the battle for men's minds, did not irrevocably commit himself to these interpretations. Although Stalin had freely admitted the enormous Soviet losses, he never wavered from his insistence that German defeat was inevitable. To buttress this conviction, Stalin stated in his stirring speech at Red Square on November 7, 1941, that German losses in the first four months of the war were some 4,500,000, a truly implausible figure.[22] Having indicated that the Germans were near collapse

[20]An analysis of Stalin's refusal to believe in the warnings provided to him of the imminent German invasion and of his behaviour in the first two weeks of the war can be found in Harrison Salisbury, *The 900 Days* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 55-70.

[21]See Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, Vol. III: The Grand Alliance* (Boston; Houghton Mifflin, 1950), pp. 462-63.

[22]*Ibid.*, speech of November 7, 1941, p. 37. As this figure exceeded the total number of German troops in the East its absurdity is evident.

from their tremendous losses, Stalin went on to enumerate the reasons, beyond the temporary successes gained by perfidy, for both the Nazi successes and the eventual Soviet victory. It was these reasons which were of great historical significance, for they were to form the basis for much of postwar Soviet interpretation of the battle for Moscow. Indeed, many of these concepts have survived every change in Soviet political leadership until the present day, forming the backbone of all Soviet accounts of the battle for Moscow.

Stalin stated that the temporary German successes against the Red Army were caused in part, by certain "unfavourable conditions" with which the Soviet forces had to contend. These included the abscence of a second front in Europe, the German use of foreign (Finnish, Rumanian, Italian, and Hungarian) troops, and the numerical superiority in tanks and aircraft enjoyed by the Germans as a consequence of the Nazi utilization of the production centres and industrial resources of a conquered Europe.[23] These "unfavourable conditions" were merely temporary factors, soon to be erased, contended Stalin. This erasure was due to the fact that "there are three other basic factors whose force is growing from day to day and must in the future lead to the inevitable rout of the robber imperialists."[24] Such factors included the basic insecurity of the German "new order" in Europe, the instability of the German home front, and the previously mentioned coalition of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States.[25]

[23] *Ibid.*, speech of November 6, 1941, pp. 24-26.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

Turning to purely military affairs, Stalin stated that the battle for Moscow revealed several things, beyond the enormous German casualties which made Soviet victory an assured fact. First were the problems created for the German forces by the length of their communication lines, second was the toll taken of the German forces by the partisans operating in the German rear, and third was the resilience and growing strength of the Red Army. This unexpected ability of the Red Army to recover from the onerous blows of the first months of the war was a factor which the "lightminded" planners of a "lightning" war had failed to take into proper consideration when they decided on a six-months campaign in the Soviet Union. A final reason for Soviet victory was the firmness of the Soviet rear despite attempts by German agents to create discord.[26]

The Soviet victories in the winter of 1941-42, at Moscow and elsewhere, improved the military situation to such an extent that Stalin felt secure enough immediately following them to begin to establish a new interpretation of the battle for Moscow. In his speech of February 23, 1942, flushed with the triumph of the Soviet counterblows, Stalin outlined the essentials of the theory which was to become a cornerstone of postwar Soviet histories and also was to play a major role in shaping subsequent Soviet military strategy. Evaluating the first eight months of the war, Stalin enunciated the so-called five "perma-

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22-23. The reference to the stability of the Soviet rear was an obvious attempt to discount the tales of the great Moscow panic of mid-October, 1941. This panic has never been admitted in any official Soviet history of the war, but has been alluded to in some memoir works and in fictionalized accounts of the battle.

nently operating factors" of war which ensured Soviet victory. He stated that

> Now the Germans have lost the military advantages which they gained in the first months of the war as a result of the suddenness and treachery of their attack . . . . the war will be decided, not by the attendent circumstances of momentum, but by permanently operating factors: firmness of the rear, morale of the army, quantity and quality of forces, weaponry of the army, and organizational competence of the army command.[27]

These five "permanently operating factors" were intended to preclude further discussion of the initial stages of the war by providing a formula which explained the German successes at the same time as they ensured eventual Soviet victory without analyzing the campaigns of 1941, an analysis which would raise the embarassing questions which Stalin did not wish discussed: the reasons for the Soviet unpreparedness, Stalin's role in the first months of the invasion, and the poor response of the Soviet forces to the German attack.

A second major development which was initiated in the victorious aftermath of the battle for Moscow was the creation of two myths: the strategy of active defence and the concept of the strategic counter-offensive. While these two myths were fully developed only after the war, it was clear that they were posited in embryonic form as early as 1942. The two myths were both closely connected and simple in form. Active defence implied that the Soviet retreat was a planned one which was designed to lure the German forces deep into the Soviet heartland

[27] I.V. Stalin, "Prikaz narodnogo komissara oboroni," (*Prikaz* of the Peoples' Commissariat of Defence), *O velikoi otechestvennoi voiny sovetskogo soiuza* (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union) (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1946), p. 38.

and, in the process, by ". . . disputing every inch of Soviet soil"[28], weaken them so severely that the second concept, that of the strategic counteroffensive, could come into play.[29] The strategic counteroffensive, to be launched at the exact moment when the German momentum was felt to be exhausted, was designed to follow a series of separate counterblows against the Germans and to result in the beginning of the final destruction of the invaders.

Evidence of the existence of these two concepts, which were developed in full only after the war, can be found in the accounts of the war written by the Soviet war correspondents and published in London during the war itself. Writing in August of 1941, a Soviet officer stated that

> Armed with modern military techniques, educated in the spirit of the heroic traditions of the Russian people, the Red Army will find itself sufficient strength and means to proceed from separate counterblows at the enemy to a general counter-offensive which will crush the enemy.[30]

While it could be argued that this passage reflected the remnants of the prewar conviction that any enemy attack would be rapidly crushed, it also presaged the doctrine of the counteroffensive. Whether or not this work was meant to be taken seriously--its chief function obviously was propagandistic--it reflected the fact that the Soviet Party, even

[28]Stalin, *Great Patriotic War*, speech of July 3, 1941, p. 12.

[29]The concept of active defence was first developed by the military and can be found in *Voennaia mysl'*, no. 6, 1943. This issue was not available for this work and its contents are known only through reference to it in other works. See, for example, Gallagher, *Soviet History*, p. 66.

[30]Officers of the Red Army and Soviet War Correspondents, *Strategy and Tactics of the Soviet-German War* (London: Hutchison, [1942]), p. 13.

at this early date, was preparing the historical ground for a face-saving explanation of the disastrous initial battles of the Great Patriotic War.

The influence which Stalin's speeches, along with the development of the concepts of active defence and the strategic counteroffensive, had on wartime Soviet writings concerning the battle for Moscow was immediately evident. Lieutenant-General E.A. Shilovskii's account of the battle, written in 1943 as part of the operational studies series published by the General Staff Historical section, closely followed the line of Stalin's official pronouncements. The temporary German successes according to Shilovskii, were caused by the German numerical advantage, the fact that the German army had two years of combat experience, and the greater mobility of the German forces due to their mechanized equipment.[31] As well,

> Fascist Germany, at the beginning of the war, perfidiously launched its military forces against the USSR without declaring war and were thus able to take advantage of the factor of surprise.[32]

The German goal of rapid victory was overturned by the "manly resistance of the Red Army and the struggle against Hitler of the Soviet people under the leadership of comrade Stalin . . ."[33], a situation which resulted in a weakening of the German momentum towards the end of August, 1941.[34]

[31] Shilovskii, *Razgrom nemetskikh voisk*, pp. 1-2.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The successes of the German drive on Moscow during October were minimized by Shilovskii. Instead, he emphasized the efforts of the heroic Moscovites to prepare for the German attack.[35] Also prominently mentioned was the defence of Tula, an action which Shilovskii claimed prevented the Germans from achieving their goal of flanking Moscow from the south. The great German victories at Briansk and Viaz'ma, to the west of Moscow, with their attendent enormous Soviet casualties were not discussed in any detail, except to mention that the heroic efforts of the Red Army greatly slowed the German advance and aided in the preparation of the defences before Moscow.[36] Despite the enormous losses which Shilovskii stated the Germans took during October,

> by the beginning of November, there were a whole line of indications and information so that it could have been concluded that the enemy was regrouping, gathering his forces. . . for a new series of blows.[37]

This comment was an example of the didactic intent of Shilovskii's account and as well a veiled criticism of the military reconnaissance which failed to anticipate and block the German attack.

Shilovskii then introduced two ideas that were to be fundamental to postwar Stalinist interpretations of the battle: the genius of Stalin as a military leader and the concept of active defence. In discussing the German plan for the drive on Moscow, ". . . a typical

[35] In *ibid.*, pp. 6-7, Shilovskii furthers the myth that no panic took place in Moscow by citing the diary of an heroic Moscow engineer and quoting patriotic speeches from this period.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 7

[37] *Ibid.*

German army operation, . . . a mechanized 'Cannae'. . .", the author added

> This form of German envelopment operation, flanking Moscow with tank wedges, was opposed by our active manoeuvres. Not for the first time in Russian military history was the courage of the people and the genius of its leader . . . able to defeat the German invaders.[38]

Nevertheless, as well as lauding Stalin and the Soviet people for their efforts in driving back the enemy, Shilovskii still gave full credit to the individual Soviet commanders for their roles in the defeat of the Germans. "The project and plan of comrade Stalin for the defence of Moscow was carried out on the West front under the talented command of general of the army Zhukov."[39] In addition to this praise for the commander of the Western front, Shilovskii also mentioned others who played prominent roles in the battle for Moscow. These included K.K. Rokossovskii, commander of the 16th Army which played a vital defensive role against the German assault; N.G. Kusnetsov who, as commander in chief of the navy in Leningrad, helped stabilize that front easing the situation at Moscow; I.S. Konev, who commanded the Kalinin front which protected the northern flankof Moscow; the prominent commander of the 1st Guards cavalry corps, P.A. Belov, who played an important role in the December counterattack; and F.I. Golikov, whose 10th Army provided the reserves necessary for the Soviet stand at Moscow.[40] This tendency to give distinction to individual commanders was a feature of those

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[39] *Ibid.*,

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

wartime instructional works, like Shilovskii's, a feature which was not continued in the postwar period, when the propagandistic accounts which were then current assigned all credit to Stalin.

The German advance which began on November 15 was portrayed by Shilovskii as the last desperate attempt of the Germans to achieve their objectives before the onset of winter. According to Shilovskii, the Germans, utilizing some 51 divisions and with a 5:2 numerical superiority in tanks, achieved some intial success but stubborn Red Army resistance resulted in enormous German losses of some 55,000 dead in the period from November 15 to December 5.[41] By the beginning of December, Shilovskii noted, the situation was the most favourable for the Red Army since the beginning of the war. In a passage designed to illustrate the situation for the benefit of the military personnel of the Soviet forces still engaged in the struggle against the German invader, Shilovskii outlined the factors which had combined to weaken the German position: the problem of long communication lines, the activities of the partisans in the German rear, the damage caused by the increasing Red airforce raids, and the worsening morale of the German troops.[42] To take advantage of this situation, according to Stalin, the Soviet counterblows were launched in December, 1941, with the result that the immediate threat to the Soviet capital was ended. And, the initiative for the Soviet counterblows was assigned to Stalin by Shilovskii, who stated, "on December 5 our forces, by the *prikaz* of

[41] *Ibid.*, p.8 (51 divisions), p. 12 (5:2 advantage), and p. 17 (German losses of 55,000 dead).

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

comrade Stalin, resolutely initiated their counterblows against the flanks of the German groups."[43] In this discussion, Shilovskii implied two intriguing things: first, a reiteration of the idea of the strategic counteroffensive, that the Soviet command was waiting for the Germans to overextend themselves before launching a counterattack and, second, that Stalin was personally responsible for the planning and execution of the counterblows at Moscow. Both of these views became the orthodox interpretation after the war until the death of Stalin, when they were challenged immediately.

In his conclusion, Shilovskii stated that the battle for Moscow had certain results which profoundly affected the remainder of the war. These results included: a switch by the Red Army from strategic defence to the intitiation of counterblows which spelled the end of the German *ad hoc* planning, the end of the myth of the invincibility of the German army, and the liberation of certain areas of the Soviet Union from German domination.[44] These conclusions have endured, with certain minor modifications, until the present day. The Soviet contention that the battle for Moscow marked the flood tide of the German successes has especially remained a hallmark of Soviet histories. While this may seem strange, as the German advance reached its maximum extent in 1942, it is more convenient for Soviet histories to view the actions of 1942 as a temporary Soviet loss of the strategic initiative gained at Moscow. By doing so, the periodization of the war remains more straightforward; all events leading up to Moscow are the result of the

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

advantages gained by German perfidy, while all results after the battle are the result of the coming to the fore of the factors which made Soviet victory inevitable. Shilovskii attributed the Soviet victory at Moscow to just these very factors. While foreigners might speak of the "miracle at Moscow",

> we see that there was no miracle here. There was the great patriotism of the people, there was the bravery and art of the Red Army, and there was the wise leadership of comrade Stalin. These gave us the victory over the Germans in the great battle at Moscow.[45]

As this account was to serve as a training manual for Soviet forces, the activities of the Red Army were especially singled out for praise in an attempt to build high morale in the Army. The author stated that "the operations at Moscow showed exceptional dynamism and diversity. Nearly all types of operational and tactical aspects found their expression here brilliantly."[46] In addition, the Red Army featured "unyielding leadership and active defence of the approaches to Moscow . . ."[47] in its efforts to stem the German advance.

While much of this could have been written in the postwar era as easily as in 1943, one comment revealed that the wartime tendency towards a greater degree of objectivity and candour, necessitated by the utilitarian intent of such accounts, had not yet been submerged by the doctrinaire view of inevitable, pre-planned Soviet victory directed by the omniscient comrade Stalin. In discussing the reasons for the

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

success of the counterblows, Shilovskii stated that this achievement was due, in part, to

> a concentration of large reserves, luckily arranged on the flanks outside the ring of the tank encirclement of the enemy; and the changeover to resolute counterblows with the resulting destruction of the striking forces of the enemy.[48]

The admission that the deployment of the reserves outside the German pincers was "lucky" was one which was possible during the freer days of 1943, when improving the quality of Soviet army commanders demanded a truthful approach, but one which would have been unacceptable in the years following the end of the war for two reasons. Such a "lucky" occurrence could be taken to imply that the Soviet victory was due to German mistakes rather than to Soviet initiative, or, it could be taken as a refutation of the doctrine of the strategic counteroffensive which claimed that reserves had been situated by prior arrangement at key points in the path of the advancing German forces. In either case, such a suggestion was unacceptable in the days after the war, as it ran counter to the new official interpretations.

It is clear, therefore, that there were two opposing trends within the body of Soviet wartime accounts of the battle for Moscow. The first trend was frank and objective, admitting the difficulties and dangers facing the Soviet Union along the the shortcomings of the Soviet preparation. Also stressed was an emphasis on the partnership of the Soviet people and the government against the Nazis as well as the importance of the Allied contribution to the Soviet war effort. Stalin's speeches of July 3, 1941, November 6 and 7, 1941, and to some extent,

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 31. Emphasis mine.

that of February 23, 1942, were typical of this reasonable objective approach, as were those accounts compiled by the military itself with the aim of providing studies which would serve to improve the fighting qualities of the armed forces. The second trend in Soviet historical interpretation of the battle for Moscow came to the fore later than the first and featured certain things which were incompatible with the first view. This later approach viewed the battle for Moscow as the logical culmination of the Soviet military theories of active defence and the strategic counteroffensive. These *ex post facto* doctrines were created to gloss over the inadequacy of prewar Soviet military planning and poor Soviet leadership, two factors for which the blame could be put on Stalin, since he was responsible for both the purges of senior military personnel in 1937-38 and the promotion of their successors.

Despite the differences between these two approaches, there existed certain common features which were to prove remarkably constant in the postwar, Stalinist evaluations. All accounts cheered the Soviet people for the heroic efforts, gave no mention to the mass defections to the German army nor the great Moscow panic, chided the perfidy of the Germans in attacking the Soviet Union, emphasized the enormous German losses at the gates of Moscow as a result of the efforts of the Red Army, and stated that the German defeat at Moscow changed the complexion of the entire eastern campaign in certain concrete fashions.

With the end of the war, there were certain dramatic changes in Soviet society which had no less profound repercussions in the realm of Soviet historiography. For reasons which still remain controversial, Stalin felt that his control over the Soviet Union had been weakened

during the struggle against Germany. Freed from continuous control by the exigencies of war, certain elements in Soviet society, such as the Army and the intelligensia, had grown in power and influence and had demonstrated a disturbing capacity for independent action and thought.[49] To counter these tendencies, Stalin instigated a repression reminiscent of those of the 'thirties. The man placed in charge of implementing this repression was Andrei Zhdanov, a member of the Politburo and former head of the Leningrad Party organization during the war, who made his *raison d'etre* the following dictum.

> We demand that our comrades, both as leaders in literary affairs and as writers, be guided by the vital force of the Soviet order--its politics. Only thus can our youth be reared, not in a devil-may-care attitude and spirit of ideological indifference, but in a strong and vigorous revolutionary spirit.[50]

Such a linking of scholarship and politics led to a scarcity of publications concerning the war, both by professional historians and by literary figures, since both realism and objectivity were incompatible with the political restrictions of Zhdanov's edict.[51] That this edict was not loosely enforced was shown by the limited number of scholarly and

[49]In John Erickson, "Zhukov, Khrushchev and the Red Army," *Marine Corps Gazette*, vol. 42 (November, 1958), p. 50, the author states that the period from 1942 to 1945 was one of freedom in the Army from political control. This freedom, no doubt caused by the Soviet need to permit a greater flexibility in order to prevent another debacle like the German advance of 1941, undoubtedly made Stalin fear that the military could pose a threat to his own position if such license were continued.

[50]As cited in Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (2nd ed.: New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 584.

[51]This is discussed in Gallagher, *Soviet History*, chapter four, "The Professional Historians and the War," and chapter five, "The Writers and the War".

literary works of any note published concerning the war period between 1945 and Stalin's death in 1953, a situation brought about by Zhdanov's tight censorship and repressive measures with regard to outspoken military and scholarly figures.

But, the repression so evident in Soviet intellectual life was unable to extend as completely into the military sphere for two reasons. First, there was the need for a strong military force to maintain the Soviet position in eastern Europe, and second, there was a need to maintain the military might of the Soviet Union in the face of the enormous military potential displayed by the United States in World War II. With the development of the Cold War, this latter consideration came to be paramount in the Soviet Union. Therefore, such repression as occurred within the Soviet military focused on the removal of certain key military figures whose popularity, deliberately created by Soviet propaganda during the war in order to strengthen the war effort, seemed to rival that of Stalin himself. These removals occurred soon after Stalin's "election" speech of February 9, 1946,[52] and began with the transfer of Zhukov from his post as commander of the Soviet occupation forces in Germany to the relatively obscure position as commander of the Odessa military district. The next year was particularly notable for its repression of the military. In addition to Zhukov's demotion, Admiral Kuznetsov was removed as first deputy Minister of Defence,

[52]Raymond L. Garthoff in "The Marshals and the Party: Soviet Civil-Military Relations in the Postwar Period", *Total War and the Cold War, Problems in Civilian Control of the Military*, ed. by Harry L. Coles (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press), p. 243, argues that this speech adumbrated the period of postwar military repression.

while the new State Secrets Act passed in June severely restricted the public freedom of speech of high military figures, effectively preventing any attempt for rebuttal by the military of the few accounts of the events of the Great Patriotic War which were allowed to appear.[53]

Paralleling the repression of the military in the Soviet Union was a solidification of the doctrinal lessons to be drawn from the experiences of the Great Patriotic War in general and from the battle of Moscow in particular. The doctrine of the counteroffensive, first developed in 1943, was set in its final form in 1946 with the publication of an article outlining it in detail in *Voennaia mysl'*.[54] This interpretation was popularized in Stalin's famous letter to a certain Colonel Razin, published in *Voprosy istorii*.[55] In it, while detailing the outlines of the strategic counteroffensive, Stalin attempted to find historical antecedents for the counteroffensive. Harkening back to Napoleon's invasion of Russia, Stalin remarked, "it [the importance of the counteroffensive] was also well known to our gifted General Kutuzov who destroyed Napoleon and his army with the help of a well-prepared counteroffensive.[56] The conclusion was clear; Stalin, "the greatest

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[54] *Voennaia mysl'*, no. 6, 1946. This article was unavailable for this study and its contents are known only indirectly through other sources. It is, for example, cited in John Keep ed., *Contemporary History in the Soviet Mirror* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 228.

[55] I.V. Stalin, *"Otvet tov. Stalina na pis'ma tov. Razina"*, Comrade Stalin's Reply to a Letter from Comrade Razin), *Voprosy istorii*, no. 2 (1947), pp. 5-7.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

commander of all the ages" as he had come to be styled, was tying in the Soviet actions in the early part of the Great Patriotic War with one of the most important campaigns in Russian military history while, at the same time, linking his own name with that of the illustrious Kutuzov.

A quick examination of some of the postwar Soviet commentary on the war indicates the strength of the grip which active defence, the strategy of the counteroffensive, and the five "permanently operating factors" had upon them. An inspection of the leading Army journal, *Krasnaia zvezda*, during the period from 1946 through 1949, shows just how much Stalin's strategic pronouncements coupled with his demotion of leading military figures had influenced the military evaluation of the battle for Moscow.[57] An article by a Major-General Isaer in February, 1946, stated that the Soviet victory was due, among other things, to constantly active defence, new methods of transition from strategic defence to strategic offence, and the supremacy of the Soviet economic system.[58] An article written in the spring of that same year by E.A. Shilovskii, entitled "The Celebration of Stalinist Strategy", alloted the credit for the victory at Moscow to the realization of Stalin's

[57]Fortunately, the task of examining this major and significant journal has been simplified by Alexander Dallin's fine study, *Red Star on Military Affairs, 1945-1952: A Selected List of Articles in the Soviet Newspapers* (Santa Clara, California, Rand Corporation, 1956). This work provides capsule summaries of many important articles which were unavailable for this work and much use has been made of these resumes. (Dallin's work is hereafter cited as *Red Star*).

[58]Major-General F. Isaer, *"Strategischeskoi iskusstve Krasnoi Armii v velikoi otechestvennoi voine"*, (Strategical Art of the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War) *Krasnaia zvezda*, 20 February, 1946, as cited in Dallin, Red Star, pp. 4-5.

five "permanently operating factors", a rather large over-simplification of the views which he had previously expressed in his wartime work, *Razgrom nemetskikh voisk pod Moskvoi.* [59] In December of 1946, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Soviet victory at Moscow, a former member of the wartime General Staff Historical Section now Major-General N.A. Talenskii, published an article epitomizing the accepted Stalinist version of the battle. The temporary German advantages, Talenskii argued, were surprise, preparedness, a numerical superiority in planes and tanks, and mobility. Soviet efforts in the early part of the war (that is, until the Moscow counteroffensive) were significant only in that they provided time for the preparation of the Soviet counterblows. The victory itself was due to Stalin's genius and was not influenced either by German mistakes or by the vagaries of weather.[60]

By 1947, the victory of the Stalinist interpretation was complete. Several articles published in this year concerning the failure of the German plan at Moscow made little attempt to analyze the events at the capital but resorted to quoting such "documents" as Stalin's letter to Razin and the official biography of Stalin as evidence for their conclusions.[61] Although the professional historians tended to

[59]Lieutenant-General E.A. Shilovskii, *"Torzhestvo stalinskoi strategii"*, (The Celebration of Stalinist Strategy) *Krasnaia zvezda*, 9 May, 1946, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, p. 6.

[60]Major-General N.A. Talenskii, *"Velikaia pobeda stalinskii strategii"*, (Great Victory of Stalinist Strategy) *Krasnaia zvezda*, 5 December, 1946, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, p. 10.

[61]See Major-General I. Zubkov, *Krakh germanskoi voennoi doktriny"*, (Failure of German Military Doctrine) *Krasnaia zvezda*, 24 April, 1947, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, pp. 12-13 and Colonel V. Rudnitskii, *"Pochemu Sovetskoi Soiuz pobedil v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine"*,

avoid writing about the war as was previously mentioned, due to its highly controversial political nature, 1947 did mark the publication of a slim volume on the war by that workhorse of Party history, I.I. Mints. [62] In his discussion of the battle for Moscow, Mints added nothing to previous postwar Stalinist accounts. The period from October through November, stated Mints, marked certain changes in the situation at the front which spelled the eventual failure of the German attacks. These changes included the fact that ". . . all fascist forces were far from their bases", the German rear was unstable due to the actions of the partisans, and new Soviet reserves had been formed and concentrated at strategic points.[63]

The final German offensive in November began, according to Mints, with some 51 divisions, including 13 tank division and 5 mechanized ones.[64] The failure of the German drive resulted, in this account, from the stubborn defence of the Red Army which reduced the rate of the German advance from 10-20 kilometers per day in the opening stages, to

(Why the Soviet Union Won the Great Patriotic War), *Krasnaia zvezda*, 20 October, 1947, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, pp. 15-16.

[62] I.I. Mints, *Velikaia Otechestvennoi voina sovetskogo soiuza* (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union) (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1947). Bertram D. Wolfe in his article, "The New Gospel According to Krushchev", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 38, no. 4 (1960), p. 580, in discussing certain Soviet authors of a collective history of the CPSU, makes a telling point concerning Mints ". . . I.I. Mintz [sic] who has written so many legendary pages (legend to be taken in its literal not its poetic sense) in histories of the civil war, is alive and present, . . . ".

[63] Mints, *Velikaia Otechestvennoi voina*, p.23.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 22

some 2-3 kilometers per day by the end of November, with a concommitant increase in casualties to the German forces.[65] Any uncertainty as to the origin of the initiative for the counterblows was removed by Mints who stated:

> The moment grew imminent for the launching of the counter-blows for which the Red Army was laready prepared according to the plan prepared by comrade Stalin.[66]

The success of the first forty days of the counterblows was great, re-wulting in German losses of ". . . nearly 300,000 soldiers and officers."[67]

The results of the battle for Moscow were clear in Mint's account: Moscow was the ". . . beginning of the end for the Hitlerite army in the second world war. . .", it sapped the morale of the German troops, it destroyed the myth of fascist invincibility, and "it revealed the superiority of Stalinist strategy and tactics and the adventurist nature of the strategy and tactics of the gascist commanders.[68] In support of this latter contention, Mints cited Stalin's speech of February 23, 1942, with its mention of the five "permanently operating factors". The omissions in this work were also very significant. There was no mention of many of the prominent Red Army commanders who held responsible positions at Moscow, including Zhukov; ther was similarly

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 25

[68] *Ibid.* The term "adventurist" is used here in its uniquely Soviet context, a meaning which implies the necessary weakness and failure of plans based upon the assumptions common to non-Soviet statesmen and military figures.

no mention of the Moscow riots or of any failure in the morale of the Soveit troops; and there was no mention of refutation of the contention advanced by some German generals that Hitler's indecision in the summer of 1941 and his order to to retreat in the winter of 1941/42 led to the German defeat.[69] Nor, finally, was there any mention of the Allied aid to the Soviet Union.

The worsening of the international situation in 1948 with the escalation of the Cold War as exemplified by the Berlin blockade resulted in an interesting change in Soviet military writing. Although in the immediate postwar period, *Krasnaia zvezda* had evinced a lively interest in Western military thought due to the Soviet appreciation of the military might of the West, the tendency from 1948 until the death of Stalin was to ignore or ridicule foreign strategic pronouncements. This was particularly evident in discussions concerning nuclear weapons, discussions which tended to ignore foreign claims that future wars would be decided quickly, by atomic bombs.[70] This attitude stemmed from two factors: the Soviet inability to duplicate the American achievement in producting an atomic device, an inability which placed the Soviet Union in an inferior military position vis-a-vis the West and the fact that such an admission would require the re-examination of the significance of the factor of surprise.

This latter factor had its repercussions in Soviet discussions of the battle for Moscow. It served to harden the Soviet insistence

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] E. Tarle, "9 *Maia*", (May 9), *Krasnaia zvezda*, 9 May, 1950, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, p. 30.

that the factor of surprise was of only "temporary, transitory"[71] importance and that wars would continue to be won by the side which dominated the permanent factors: economic, military, and political-psychological.[72] This was due to Stalin's wish to continue to explain the battle for Moscow by reference to the "constantly operating factors" and hence to avoid any detailed study of surprise which would reveal his own errors in judgement. This wish was reflected as well in the strictures placed on the military in its discussion of military doctrine in general. A clear line was drawn between military science and military art, a line which relegated the military figures to the role of executors, not shapers, of Party determined strategy.[73]

Another factor which came to incluence the Soviet historiography of the battle for Moscow was the writings of Western commentators, particularly those by former Nazi generals, on this topic. In the West, the significance of the battle for Moscow had tended to be obscured in the postwar period by the more spectacular Soviet successes at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942/43. However, this was to change in the early '50s with the publication of the memoirs of many prominent German generals along with increased access to and the resulting published analysis

[71]Major-General I. Zubkov, *"Sovetskaia voinnaia nauka"*, (Soviet Military Science), *Krasnaia zvezda*, 14 August, 1948, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, p. 21.

[72]Colonel I.S. Baz', *"O postiannо-deistvuiushchikh faktorakh, reshaiushchikh sud'by voiny"*, (Concerning the constantly Active Factors which Conclusively Decide a War), *Krasnaia zvezda*, 27 February, 1949, as cited in Dallin, *Red Star*, p. 24.

[73]The distinction between military art and military science is discussed in Gallagher, *Soviet History*, p. 44.

of captured German documents by Western scholars. Perhaps first recognition of the significance of the battle for Moscow was made by Admiral Kurt Assmann who concluded, in an article published early in 1950, that the battle for Moscow was the decisive point in the war.[74] Assmann, an American admiral whose views were shaped by his interviews with German officers and his examination of captured German papers undertaken as part of the Allied occupation of Germany, arrived at the conclusions which were to become the mainstays of Western interpretations of the battle for Moscow. Assmann stated that "the loss of almost six weeks of precious summer weather had a decisive and ominous effect on the outcome of the eastern campaign.[75] Further, he asserted that the cold weather was a major factor in the failure of the German advance on Moscow.[76]

Interestingly, the factor of the harsh weather had been summarily treated by most Soviet works until this Western assertion. In Stalin's speech of November 6, 1941, for example, he had simply stated that the German soldiers were desperately driving towards Moscow, ". . . for he knows that winter holds nothing good in store for him."[77] Shilovskii's account also had laid little significance on the factor of the winter, mentioning it only for its effect on the German troops who, due to the "adventuresomeness" of the German command, were unprepared for the

[74]Admiral Kurt Assmann, "The Battle for Moscow. Turning Point of the War", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 28 (January, 1950), p. 327.

[75]*Ibid.*, p. 309

[76]*Ibid.*, pp. 322-23.

[77]Stalin, *Great Patriotic War*, p. 20.

harsh winter.[78] In the immediate postwar period, the Soviet military historians (as usual, developing theories in advance of their acceptance by the civilian scholars) had stated firmly that the Soviet victory was due neither to mistakes of the German command nor to the weather.[79] Mints' 1947 work had not reacted as of yet to this military view, for Mints referred to Stalin's November speech in developing his interpretation of the effect of the weather and remarked only that the German successes in 1941 ". . . had to be achieved rapidly due to the eventual blows of winter."[80] However, following Western assertions of the significance of the Russian winter, the Soviet position became more firm and completely rejected this bourgeois line of thought, although this new approach in Soviet histories did not become evident until the period after Stalin's death.[81]

The close of the Stalin period was one of outward tranquility which masked seething discontent. Despite Stalin's firm control of the Soviet publishing apparatus and hence of Soviet histories concerning the Great Patriotic War, there were certain factors which suggested that in the event of his death or incapacitation that there would be a sharp revision in the prevalent Soviet interpretation of the battle for

[78]Shilovskii, *Razgrom nemetskikh voisk*, p. 25.

[79]Talenskii, *"Velikaia pobeda stalinskii strategii"*, p. 10.

[80]Mints, *Velikaia Otechestvennoi voina*, p. 22.

[81]This was almost entirely due to the fact that few of the memoirs of the German generals were published prior to 1950, and to the fact that there was little scholarly work prior to this date due to the fact that many of the necessary documents were restricted by the Allies after the war. With the time lag typical in academic debates, therefore, this meant that Soviet refutations began only in the mid-'fifties.

Moscow. Stalin's refusal to permit a re-examination of the significance of the factor of surprise in the battle of Moscow, an examination which would necessarily have involved the widespread analysis of the Soviet failures in the early part of the war and Stalin's culpability for them, was particularly galling to the military. The insistence on the simplistic approach derrivative from the five "permanently operating factor" plus the arrogation of all credit for the victory at Moscow to Stalin meant that the military would not only be prevented from examining the key factor of surprise which was of prime importance in the nuclear age but also that they would be deprived of the glory which was rightfully theirs for the actions at Moscow. Nor was the military discontent with Stalin's interpretation of the war the only one. Paralleling their anger was that of the professional historians who chafed under the narrow restrictions of Stalin's views. Thus, the question which had to be answered with the death of Stalin was not whether this would result in a new Soviet interpretation of the battle for Moscow, but rather what direction this new view would take.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM THE DEATH OF STALIN TO THE OUSTER OF ZHUKOV (1953-1957)

"Whirl is king, having deposed Zeus."

Aristophanes

With the death of Stalin in the spring of 1953, widespread changes began to occur within the Soveit Union. On the political level, a fierce behind the scenes struggle was being waged for the right of political succession to Stalin, while a cautious element of intellectual awareness began to emerge as issues which had lain dormant during the Stalin period were once again debated.[1] These two factors, the reawakening of academic thought and the political in-fighting, had a special significance for Soviet historians. However, the hope that historical studies could emerge from the restrictions placed upon them by the Stalinist regime was balanced by the need for caution in the absence of a stable political and ideological situation. Such caution was particularly evident in the sensitive area of the history of the Great Patriotic War.[2]

This timid attitude, however, was not found within the ranks of the military profession. It had long been unhappy with the limits placed upon military thought by the dogmatic application of Stalin's five permanently operating factors to all facets of military doctrine.

[1] A. Rothberg, "Currents in the Literary Volga", *New Mexico Quarterly*, XXV, No. 4 (Winter, 1955-1956), pp. 255-77.

[2] For example, Colonel I.V. Maryganov's book, *Peredovoi Kharakter sovetskoi voennoi nauki* (Concerning the Nature of Soviet Military Science) (Moscow: *Voenizdat*, 1953), p. 37, retains the Stalinist approach to military science.

> "Soviet military science rejects the bankrupt position of bourgeois military theory which exaggerated the importance of temporary factors for the outcome of war and thereby relies on the triumph of transitory elements . . . Soviet military science. . . [relies on] the permanently operating factors . . . ."

As cited in H.S. Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union* (2nd ed.: New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), pp. 33-34.

Particularly irritating was the fact that Stalinist military science took little notice of the development of nuclear weapons and their implications for future conflicts. This issue, although it concerned military affairs, was not without its political overtones, for the leading candidates to the political leadership in the Soviet Union, N.S. Khrushchev and G. Malenkov, took opposing sides on the issue.[3] Thus, the military, which had already played a major role in the political affairs of the Soviet Union by assisting in the removal of Lavrenty Beria in the summer of 1953, was again in a position to influence the political leadership contest in the Soviet Union during the period from 1954 to 1956. Equally, the intimate connection between military doctrine and the treatment accorded certain aspects of military history, resulting from the fact that changes in the former would necessitate changes in the latter and *vice versa*, meant that politics reached deeply into the historical scene and that the strategic debate was of great significance for the Soviet military historian.

Consequently, while the political quarrel between Malenkov and Khrushchev was carried on primarily over the issues of the direction of the economy and the potential significance of the hydrogen bomb, within the military establishment itself a debate was raging over the general thrust of military doctrine and strategy.[4] The first indication of this

[3]The opposing views of Krushchev and Malenkov and the effect of conflict on military affairs have been discussed in several books and articles. The most comprehensive of these is R.L. Gasthoff, "The Role of the Military in Recent Soviet Politics", *Russian Review*, XVI, No. 2 (April, 1957), pp. 15-25. Garthoff discusses this same issue in a more general context in *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), pp. 22-24.

[4]Malenkov favoured an increased production of consumer goods at

debate was the criticism of Stalinist military principles contained in a work by Major-General N.V. Pukhovsky entitled *Concerning Soviet Military Science* which was accepted for publication; that is, was sent to the printer after having been approved by the censor, on November 16, 1953. In this work, Pukhovsky chided contemporary Soviet military writers for quoting Stalin extensively at every turn, contending that this trend was harmful to a full explication of military thought.[5]

While Pukhovsky merely slighted those who insisted on slavishly citing Stalin to support their views, a major attack on Stalinist military theory was published in the November, 1953 issue of *Voennaia mysl'*. In an article entitled "On the Question of the Character of the Laws of Military Science", the editor of *Voennaia mysl'*, Major-General N.A. Talenskii, advanced three radical theses concerning the nature of war.[6] Talenskii argued that the military must not unthinkingly obey the five permanently operating factors, that military theory must not be based on the ideological presupposition that the Soviet Union would win any

the expense of heavy industry and advocated the use of state military supplies to achieve this end. Krushchev, on the other hand, supported a heavy industry program which also was preferred by the military. Concerning nuclear weapons, Malenkov advanced the idea that they indicated that future wars would not be able to be won, a view rejected by Kruschchev and the military. For a full discussion of these two issues, see J.M. Mackintosh, "Soviet Defense Debate", *Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. J.M. Mackintosh (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 88-95.

[5]Major-General N.V. Pukhovsky, *O sovetskoi voennoi nauki* (Concerning Soviet Military Science) (Moscow: *Voenizdat*, 1953), as discussed in Robert Conquest, *Power and Policy in the USSR* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), pp. 330-31.

[6]Major-General N.A. Talenskii, "On the Question of the Character of the Laws of Military Science", *Voennaia mysl'*, no. 9, (November, 1953).

war in which it engaged, and that it was essential to realize the universality of military principles. The relevancy of Talenskii's attack to the writing of the history of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union was immediately clear. Such a revision in military theory would necessitate a re-examination of the early stages of the war, including the battle of Moscow, if military thought and the history on which it was based were to be consistent.

Consequently, the rather mild views advanced by Talenskii were immediately the subject of a barrage of criticism. Marshal of the Soviet Union, A. Vasilevskii, writing in *Krasnaia zvezda* (February 23, 1954) stated that Soviet military science ". . . is based on the permanently operating factors determining the fate of war . . ."[7], and maligned Talenskii for his heretical opinions. The result of this article and others of a similar nature published in the professional journals by leading conservative military figures was the removal of Talenskii from the editorial board of *Voennaia mysl'* in mid-1954. This removal did not spell the end of the debate over the issues raised by Talenskii, for with the fall of Malenkov in February, 1955, and the accession to power of Khrushchev, these issues came once again to the fore, as Khrushchev's candidacy was backed by those among the military,

For the Soviet military debate which ensued following the publication of this article and subsequent articles both pro and con, see Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy*, pp. 61-71, and especially, Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union*, "Breaking the old Mould", pp. 28-64.

[7]Marshal of the Soviet Union A. Vasilevskii, "On Guard over the Security of Our Soviet Motherland", *Krasnaia zvezda*, February 23, 1954, as cited in Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union*, p. 48. Further, in H.S. Dinerstein, "The Revolution in Soviet Strategic Thinkings", *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVI, No. 1 (January, 1958), pp. 241-52.

including Marshal Zhukov, who stood for revision of Stalinist military doctrine.[8]

As a result, in that same month, *Voennaia mysl'* published an article by Marshal of the Tank Troops P.A. Rotmistrov which advanced again the issues raised by Talenskii.[9] In addition ot Talenskii's contentions, Rotmistrov introduced renewed discussion of the question of the importance of surprise in warfare, challenging the Stalinist assumption of its transitory importance. He argued that

> It must be plainly said that, in the situation of the employment of atomic and hydrogen weapons, surprise is one of the decisive conditions for the attainment of success. . .".[10]

This article was immediately followed by a second, also by Rotmistrov, in *Krasnaia zvezda*, which reiterated his stand almost word for word.

> It is necessary to state clearly that in certain cases a surprise aggression with the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons may appear to be one of the decisive conditions for the achievement of success, not only in the initial period of the war, but in the war as a whole.[11]

The contemporaneity of the fall of Malenkov and the renewal of the strategic debate makes it seem unlikely that the two events were coincidental.

[8]Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy*, pp. 67-69, argues that the publication of Rotmistrov's article, which had been received by *Voennaia mysl'* some time before it was published, was due to the direct, personal behest of Zhukov.

[9]Marshal of the Tank Troops P.A. Rotmistrov, *Voennaia mysl'*, No. 2 (February, 1955), pp. 18-27. Available in English translation from the United States Department of the Army under the title "The Role of Surprise in Contemporary War".

[10]*Ibid.*, p.1.

[11]Marshal of the Tank Troops P.A. Rotmistrov, *"Za tvorchskoi razrabotky voprosov sovetskoi voennoi nauky"*, (For the Creative Examination of the Questions of Soviet Military Science), *Krasnaia zvezda*, March 24, 1955, as cited in Mackintosh, "Soviet Defense Debate, p. 92.

Bulganin's replacement by Zhukov as Minister of Defence was an indication that the military had demanded and received, in return for their support of Khrushchev, a new Minister who did not accept Malenkov's idea that nuclear war was unthinkable. This line of argument is supported by the content of the March, 1955 editorial of *Voennaia mysl'*, which stated, in a frenzy of *mea culpa*, that Rotmistrov's article was

> . . . held up without basis . . . thus displaying a lack of the necessary boldness in raising a new and timely question having important significance for a correct understanding of contemporary war.[12]

The tone of this kind of editorial comment would suggest that the change of approach was due more to political pressure than to genuine academic conversion. This type of editorialising is often used in the Soviet Union as a means of publicizing a newly decided change in policy and as a kind of guideline for other works on the same topic. Indeed, this editorial was a signal to other Soviet publications that similar radical articles should no longer be held up but published immediately.

This does not suggest, however, that surprise in the post-Stalin period was accorded the principal place in military science. Rotmistrov, a moderate pioneer, himself noted this when he qualified his remarks on surprise by adding

> When the aggressive State is not in a position to secure ascendancy in all constant factors, then it is not possible for surprise alone to guarantee the vicotrious outcome of a war.[13]

[12]As cited in R.L. Garthoff, "Surprise and Blitzkrieg in Soviet Eyes" *Royal Canadian Air Force Staff College Journal*, 1959, p. 17.

[13]Rotmistrov, *"Za tvorcheskoi razrabotky"* as cited in Malcolm Makintosh, *Contemporary Soviet Military Doctrine* (Oxford: St. Anthony's College, 1959), p. 5.

Nor was Rotmistrov the only Soviet writer who rejected the wholesale acceptance of surprise as the dominant factor in war. One Western author has noted ". . . over forty specific rejections of blitzkrieg. . ."[14] in Soviet military periodicals in the period from 1953 to 1957. This suggested that the revision of Soviet military strategy was not so broad as to overturn all of Stalinist doctrine but did indicate a new-found willingness to discuss the previously static issues of military affairs. Consequently, while it is evident from Rotmistrov's article that the Soviets still accepted the concept of constant factors, it is also clear that a new spirit of discovery had begun to operate in the military mind.

While the Stalinist theory of the transience of the importance of the surprise factor bore the brunt of the military criticism which followed, other intrinsic elements of the five permanently operating factors did not escape unscathed.[15] For example, the Stalinist theory that Western military science was doomed because of its inability to apply properly the five permanently operating factors was rejected, although this change of heart occurred much later than the revisions concerning the role of surprise. The new Soviet attitude towards bourgeois military thought was stated aptly by Marshal Moskalenko in his speech of February 23, 1957:

> We should not forget that great changes have taken place in the armed forces of the imperialist states . . . . Soviet soldiers are being taught to defeat a powerful and cunning

[14] Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy*, p.86.

[15] The entire question of the re-evaluation of Stalinist military thought in the period of 1953 to 1958, is analyzed extremely well in Mackintosh, *Contemporary Doctrine*.

> enemy, very well equipped and with great mobility and manoeuverability.[16]

Also, the question of active defence, that theory which held that all the encirclements of Soviet troops by the Germans during the advance on Moscow were part of a preconceived Soviet plan to wear down the Nazi forces, did not go unchallenged either.

Writing in the May, 1955, issue of *Voennaia mysl'*, Talenskii argued that the Stalinist use of the Great Patriotic War and its component events as a justification for downplaying the role of surprise and extolling the efficacy of active defence was unjustified. He suggested that:

> The problem [of modern defence] is not merely one of explaining the surprise factor, or of studying facts and examples of the use of surprise in the last war. Our task is to work out a solution seriously, paying particular attention to methods and systems of advanced warning of surprise aggression by an enemy, and of dealing him forestalling blows at all levels. . .".[17]

Although the driving foce behind these assertions was a desire to establish a new military doctrine more compatible with the new technological advances, these challenges to Stalinist military doctrine had necessary repercussions in the historical arena.

For, in freeing military doctrine from the straitjacket of Stalinist dogma, men like Rotmistrov and Talenskii had to some extent also freed the military history of the Great Patriotic War, and, in particular, that of the battle for Moscow, from the limitations imposed by Stalinist military strategy. If the principle of active defence and

[16]As cited in *ibid.*, p. 5.

[17]As cited in *ibid.*, p. 8.

the temporary nature of the factor of surprise had to be accepted no longer, then serious revisions of the history of the early portion of the war, including the battle for Moscow, could be envisaged without fear that they would be opposed by the military. Indeed, the military was certain to welcome such a revision for it would tend to support the new theory of the importance of surprise and, in addition, would allow the credit for the victory at Moscow to be goven to those military figures who directed it.

At this point, it is necessary to go back in time somewhat, to 1953, in order to examine yet another factor which was to have great influence on Soviet military doctrine and thus on the Soviet writing of the history of the war. In 1953, with the death of Stalin, Marshal Zhukov was raised from his relatively obscure position as commander of the Odessa military district to provisional membership in the Central Commitee as Deputy Minister of Defence. Here he remained until after the resignation of Malenkov in 1955, at which time he replaced Bulganin as Minister of Defence in N.S. Krushchev's new government.

The rise of Zhukov was highly significant and indicated much more than the end of the Stalin regime and the beginning of a new one under either Malenkov or Khrushchev. In order to appreciate this significance, it is necessary to understand the factionalism which existed in the Red Army's officer corps. During the postwar Stalin period there were distinct groups among Red Army officers which could be separated into three broad categories. The first group consisted of those men, like Zhukov, whose interests lay primarily with the expansion of the Army's autonomy from political control and whose political affilia-

tions, if any, were determined by how those affiliations could further the position of the military. A second clique was those officers who were part of the political apparatus within the Army and whose loyalties thus lay outside the military structure. The final element in this division was that group of officers who were professional military men but had ties of varying strength to the political apparatus of the Party.[18] The decision to return Zhukov from his obscure post in Odessa, rather than utilize figures from the second or third groups mentioned above, was indicative of the need of the new regime, first to associate itself with the highly popular wartime veteran and second to observe the principle of collective leadership in the absence of a dominant figure like Stalin. Further, this was a signal that other changes in historiography in the Soviet Union were to be undertaken by the new regime for several reasons.

First among these, there was a noticeable amount of dissatisfaction among the members of the new regime with the treatment accorded many of the heroes of the Great Patriotic War during the Stalinist period. Both Khrushchev and Malenkov had enough personal experience in the war to realize the major role played by Zhukov in the Soviet victories at Moscow and later. In the second place, the need for military support in the months immediately following Stalin's death was critical, if Beria's attempts to usurp Stalin's position for himself were to be thwarted. Zhukov's presumed lack of interest in politics, plus his

[18]Conquest, in *Power and Policy*, p. 330, makes a finer distinction among the groups in the Red Army than is done here, but agrees with this schema in general.

immense prestige both in the Army and among the Soviet populace, made him the ideal instrument with which to curb Beria. Thus, following the elimination of Beria, in June of 1953, the military became a force which could not be ignored in Soviet politics, constituting as it did the only independent force which could be used as a counterweight to the power vested in the State and Party bureaucracies. Finally, the rehabilitation of Zhukov from the semi-disgrace to which he had fallen in the postwar period indicated that the Stalinist interpretation of the war was no longer to be considered that of the Party--and hence inviolate--and that new approaches might be attempted.

Following his appointment to the Central Commitee in 1953, Zhukov and his associates in the Army threw their political weight behind Khrushchev, whose strategical and economic views seemed more in line with their own.[19] Malenkov's policies, including an emphasis on light industry at the expense of heavy and a belief, in his own words, that modern warfare ". . . means the destruction of world civilization. . ." were rejected by the military.[20] Malenkov's insistence on light industry was certain to curtail spending upon military affairs, while his belief that modern war was essentially one without vicotry and that military readiness meant maintaining a large deterent force of nuclear weapons, undermined the traditional position of conventional forces in

[19]The military point of view, favouring heavy over light industry and criticizing Malenkov for his espousal of support for the latter policy, can be found in the editorials of December 30 and 31, 1954, of *Krasnaia zvezda*.

[20]G. Malenkov, *Pravda*, March 12, 1954.

the Soviet military. A summation of the military's rejection of this position was contained in Zhukov's cryptic comment following Malenkov's fall in February, 1955, that "one must bear in mind that one cannot win a war by atomic bombs alone."[21]

While Zhukov continued to serve Khrushchev as a powerful political ally, helping to eliminate Malenkov, the military support was not without its price. The period from 1953 to 1955 witnessed striking changes within the Soviet Army. The trend to a greater freedom of the Army from internal political interference, a trend which had begun hesitantly in the last years of Stalin's rule, accelerated.[22] As well, a rehabilitation of the professional reputations of those military figures lost in the purges of 1937-38 began, indicating that the military was no longer willing to allow itself to be dominated by the dictates of the Party. In addition, some ten generals whose careers had been stunted by political factors in the Stalinist period, were given promotions to more responsible positions. Also, an objective re-evaluation of the history of the Great Patriotic War was initiated, a review designed to shift some portion of the credit for victory to the newly promoted generals and

[21] Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov, *Pravda*, February 13, 1955.

[22] The cycle of Party control through the political commissar, as opposed to the full assumption of command of the military officer within the Army is examined in John Erickson, "Zhukov, Khrushchev and Red Army" *Marine Corps Gazette*, XLII (November, 1958), pp. 48-51. The suggestion that the level of political control within the Army was falling during the final portion of Stalin's reign is made by R.L. Garthoff, in "The Marshals and the Party: Soviet Civil-Military Relations in the Postwar Period", *Total War and Cold War, Problems in Civilian Control of the Military*, ed. H.L. Coles (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 245.

the *Stavka* in general. This change in military history was certain to include the battle for Moscow, as it was this battle, above all others, which was intimately linked to Zhukov and it was not likely that he would permit the distorted Stalinist view of the battle to remain the official one. However, the degree to which the military could have its way in the revision of war history was dependent to a large extent upon his continued influence in Soviet politics.

With the ouster of Malenkov on February 7, 1955, one of the major factors cementing the alliance between Khrushchev and the military, as represented by Zhukov, was removed. This did not, however, immediately lead to a deterioration in the close cooperation between the two, for Khrushchev's position was not yet so strong that he could afford to alienate the military. What did ensue was a struggle which had numerous precedents in Soveit history. Khrushchev, the consummate *apparatchik*, having reached the top with the aid of Zhukov, began systematically to undermine Zhukov's power base in the Army by ensconcing his own supporters in key position in the military.

The attempt by Khrushchev to build up his own coterie within the military was aided by the situation which had existed during the Great Patriotic War.[24] Wartime experiences had led to the formation of two distinct camps within the military hierarchy: the "*Stavka* group", represented by men like Zhukov, Marshal Vasilevskii, and General Voronov

[24]This situation is discussed in John Erickson, "The 'Military Factor' in Soviet Policy", *International Affairs*, XXXIX, No. 2 (April, 1963), pp. 219-25. The rise of the "Stalingrad group" under Khrushchev discussed comprehensively in Roman Kolkowicz *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) pp. 220-81.

whose wartime service centred around the Soviet High Command headquarters new Moscow, and a group of Front and other field commanders whose main activities were in the southern theatres, the so-called "Stalingrad group". Khrushchev's own war experiences had been with the latter, and it was to them that he naturally turned for support. This support was not difficult to garner, for the actions of *Stavka* and its representatives during the war had often seemed highhanded to the commanders at the various fronts. As well, many of the latter supported Khrushchev for reasons of personal ambition, realizing that if Khrushchev became undisputed leader, their support would result in increased power and prestige for themselves.

Thus, with the fall of Malenkov, despite the outwardly close cooperation between Zhukov and Khrushchev, indications of Khrushchev's manoeuvering to strengthen his own position within the military were evident.[25] In the press, the credit for Soviet victories in the war began to be attributed less and less to the *Stavka* command, and more and more emphasis was placed on the fact that the political military figures, men like Ahdanov, Shcherbakov, Bulganin, and Khrushchev himself had been sent to the various fronts and had contributed highly to the successful outcome of the war.

Despite these attempts to weaken Zhukov's position, the "Khrushchev-Zhukov axis", as Garthoff neatly terms it, was a viable force until October, 1957. During this period, Zhukov managed to achieve several things which had serious implications for Soviet military history. In

[25]See Conquest, *Power and Policy*, pp. 334-35.

the aftermath of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, with its freer, anti-Stalinist atmosphere, he obtained the elimination of the Army Political Department, thereby restoring the principle of one man command *(edinonochalie)* and removed the interference of the Party military commisar *(Zampolit)*.[26] Further, under the guise of destroying myths perpetrated by Stalin's cult of personality, the paramount position of the Army high command, headed by Zhukov, in the planning and execution of the Great Patriotic War was explicitly acknowledged.[27] These moves served to strengthen the independent position of the military, but, as a corollary, made the Army and Zhukov personally increasingly appear as potential political rivals to Khrushchev's leadership. The possibility of this rivalry contributed to Zhukov's dismissal in October, 1957, and will be discussed later.

Meanwhile, while the military was achieving success under Zhukov in its attempt to re-open the strategic debate which had lain dormant under Stalin, this same success was not evident among the professional historians. Rather, their attitude was one of caution due to the lack of clear uidelines on such a politically sensitive issue as the Great Patriotic War. Perhaps the most significant work published in the years from 1953 until 1957 was B. S. Tel-pukhovskii's *An Outline of the History of the Great Patriotic War, 1941 - 1945*, published

[26]The historical significance of the *edinonachalie-zampolit* debate is discussed in Paul M. Cocks, "The Purge of Marshal Zhukov", *Slavic Review*, XXII, (September, 1963), pp. 487-92.

[27]B. Evstigneev, P. Zhilin, and S. Poginskii, *"Glubzhe izuchat' istoriiu velikoi otechestvennoi"*, (Profoundly Study the History of the Great Patriotic War) *Kommunist*, No. 10 (July, 1956), p. 73.

in 1955.[28] Tel'pukhovskii's treatment of the battle for Moscow followed an approach not too different in political orientation from those works published in the Stalin era, whilst the thirty pages devoted to the battle for Moscow illustrated the timid attitude of the historians of this time, studiously ignoring several of the more controversial aspects of the battle.[29]

The principal focus of Tel'pukhovskii's work was on the role of the Party and heroic Soviet people in the defence of Moscow. For example, three pages were devoted to the efforts of the workingmen of Moscow, under the direction of the CPSU, in building barricades and anti-tank traps, establishing regular fire brigades and anti-aircraft patrols, and similar projects and efforts.[30] Besides the proletariat of Moscow, the heroism of the entire Tula *oblast* in the defeat of the Nazis in October-November, 1941, was also featured prominently.[31]

Perhaps the most interesting, and the most revealing, facet of Tel'pukhovskii's work was his treatment of the decision-making process of the Soviet military command during the period of the German advance on Moscow, no mention was made of the Soviet response to these advances.

[28]B.S. Tel'pukhovskii chief ed., *Ocherki istorii Velikoi Otechestvoiny. 1941-1945 gg.* (An Outline of the History of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo, Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1955). This work is generally considered the most reliable short Soviet history of the war published prior to 1960.

[29]There is, for example, little discussion of the complete lack of Soviet organization in the initial stages of the opening of operation Typhoon.

[30]See *ibid.*, pp. 99-102.

[31]*Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

Tel'pukhovsky unreeled a steady stream of dates, correlating each with the appropriate amount of territory gained by the Nazis but never mentioned the Soviet reaction to these defeats. Other than citing the continual "heroic defence" of the Soviet forces, Tel'pukhovskii did not comment on what the *Stavka* and Stalin were doing during these critical weeks of the campaign. Moreover, the actions of individual Soviet military commanders were given little mention, although some, notably I.S. Konev, S.K. Rokossovskii, Panfilov, and Zhukov, were mentioned in passing. [32]

Stalin's role was subordianted to that of the Party and submerged in the catch-all phrase of "collective planning and leadership". Stalin was mentioned by name only twice, once as chief of the *Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony* (Government Committee of Defence or GKO) and once when his speech in November, 1941 at Red Square denouncing the Nazis as imperialist, reactionaries, and aggressors was cited.[33] In his role as head of GKO, Stalin's part was diminished, while the Party apparatus received the major credit for the organization of the defence of Moscow. The amount of credit assigned to Stalin for the planning of the military actions at Moscow by Tel'pukhovskii is difficult to determine, for while many of the Stalinist views of the battle were retained, Stalin's name was not associated with them.

[32]Konev is mentioned as commander of the Kalinin Front (p. 106), Rokossovskii and Panfilov are cited for their excellent work at the West Front (p. 107), and Zhukov is cited as the commander of the West Front during the Soviet counterblows of December, 1941 (p. 122).

[33]The reference to Stalin as head of GKO is in *ibid.*, p. 103, as the author of the November speech, pp. 112-13.

For example, Tel'pukhovskii stated that the disastrous encirclements at Viaz'ma and Briansk ". . . won time and allowed the amassing of reserves for counterblows."[34] The response to the German November offensive was credited collectively to the Soviet Supreme High Command and pointed out merely that it resulted from the decision that the time was ripe to push back the German aggressors.[35] He also kept the concept of active defence alive by the contention that the success of the counterblows of December, 1941 - February, 1942 was due to ". . . the firmness of the Supreme High Command" in deploying forces everywhere and exhausting the German momentum before concentrating forces at Moscow for the counterblows,[36] but he did not explain who made up this "supreme high command" nor did he indicate the reasons behind these decisions.

Whether or not Tel'pukhovskii's reduced use of the direct reference to Stalin constituted a change in the historical evaluation of Stalin's role is debatable. However, in the absence of any criticism of Stalin and his actions in the battle for Moscow, it would seem most likely that Tel'pukhovskii's work was indicative of a slight change in emphasis rather than of a full scale revision of Stalin's place in the military history of the war. To the Soviet reader, the use of the term Supreme High Command, in the absence of any revision in the Stalinist account of the battle of Moscow, might have appeared only to signify the

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[35] The apportioning of the credit for the organization of the Soviet response is in *ibid.*, p. 114, while the discussion of the decision for the counterblows is on p. 122.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

end of the need to flatter the ego of the late dictator or as a polite phrase to obscure the fact that the Soviet command in fact consisted of one man rule. Such an open admission would have to await further political change before it could be safely uttered.

The real stir in Soviet historical circles occurred in the period beginning in mid-1955 and culminated in the events following Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU.[37] At a conference for the readers of *Voprosy istorii*, the move for historical revision was begun, when Chief Editor and Secretary of the Section of Historical Sciences as well as member of the Central Committee, Anna Pankratova, called for the re-opened discussion of previously forbidden topics and the creation of new, specialized journals.[38] Further, Pankratova cited the need for more and better trained archivists and an overall improvement in the quality of Soviet histories and historians. Coupled with this call for more historical objectivity and higher professional standards, was a move which foreshadowed radical changes in historical circles. The January, 1956, edition of *Voprosy istorii* contained an editorial calling for the rehabilitation of the early Soviet historian M. N. Pokrovsky whose works had fallen into disrepute after his death in

[37]The changes of mid-1955 and early 1956 are discussed in Merle Fainsod, "Historiography and Change," in *Contemporary History in the Soviet Mirror*, ed. J. Keep (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 18-22. The entire issue of the change in Soviet historical writing in the period 1955 through 1958 is analyzed brilliantly in Heer, *Politics and History*, pp. 61-104. While the emphasis of Heer's work is on Party history, the close relationship between military and Party history make her work a valuable guide to the entire period.

[38]*Konferentsiia chitatelei zhurnala 'Voprosy istorii'"*, (Conference of the Readers of the Journal *Voprosy istorii*) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 2 (February, 1956), pp. 199-213.

1934.[39] This signalled that Soviet history in general was to be re-examined in a new light. This trend boded well for a re-evaluation of the battle for Moscow as it indicated that many of the old restrictions were to be removed.

The final impetus for the movement towards change and reform in Soviet historical writing was given by the events of the Twentieth Congress.[40] Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin ranged far afield, and touched more than once on the Great Patriotic War. Khrushchev categorically denied that the Nazi attack had been without warning:

> . . . Stalin put forward the thesis that the tragedy which our nation experienced in the first part of the war was the result of the "unexpected" attack of the Germans against the Soviet Union. But, comrades, this is completely untrue.[41]

Khrushchev then went on to cite the numerous warnings of the German attack which were available to Stalin. Further, he went on to castigate Stalin for the latter's imcompetent military leadership, even going so far as to allege ". . . that Stalin planned his operations on a globe."[42] Khrushchev also stated that Stalin tried to take all credit for the successes in the war for himself, refusing to allow any credit to be given to the military commanders. In this same vein, Khrushchev men-

[39]See *"Ob izuchenii istorii istoricheskoi nauki"*, (Concerning the Study of the History of Historical Science) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 1, (January, 1956), p. 11. The fall and rehabilitation of M.N. Pokrovsky are discussed in D. Dorotich, "Disgrace and Rehabilitation of M.N. Pokrovsky", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, VII, pp. 169-81.

[40]The best study of the implications of Khrushchev's secret speech is found in Bertran D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957).

[41]From the text of Khrushchev's speech as cited in *ibid.*, p. 164.

[42]*Ibid.*, p. 180.

tioned that Stalin had once criticized Zhukov to him, but that he, Khrushchev, had rebutted this criticism.[43]

The real credit for the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War, Khrushchev added, should go to

> . . . the Party as a whole, the Soviet government, our heroic Army, its talented leaders and brave soldiers, the whole Soviet nation.[44]

This was an indication that Zhukov's role was to be put back into the proper perspective and with it the battle for Moscow. Khrushchev then went further and called for positive measures; a serious examination of all aspects of Soviet cultural life in order to eradicate the vestiges of Stalin and Stalinism. In the historical field, Khrushchev made specific suggestions for the prompt improvement of the discipline. His speech went on to note that:

> It is especially necessary that in the immediate future we compile a serious textbook of the history of our party which will be edited in accordance with scientific Marxist objectivism, a textbook of the history of Soviet society, a book pertaining to the events of the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War.[45]

This clearly indicated, far more than the doctrinal debate within the military which had been permitted during the preceding two years had done, that the writing of the history of the Great Patriotic War was no longer to be fettered by the constraints placed upon it by Stalin.

Many of the facts alluded to by Khrushchev in his secret speech immediately made their way into Soviet historical and military publica-

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 182, 184, and 186.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

tions. For the first time, the concept of active defence was debunked by name and in specific detail. The monthly military journal, *Voennyi vestnik*, stated in the April issue that the great retreat of the first part of the war was completely unpremeditated and resulted from Soviet unpreparedness.[46] This was followed by a far more comprehensive criticism of Stalin's errors early in the war, in the May issue of *Voprosy istorii*. Here, in the guise of two rather belated book reviews of Tel'pukhovskii's 1955 edition of *An Outline of the History of the Great Patriotic War*, E.A. Boltin and A.S. Filippov outlined the new Soviet approach to the history of the first year of the Great Patriotic War.

The main thrust of these two reviews was that taken by Pankratova and Khrushchev. Tel'pukhovskii's book was criticized for its failure to utilize the vast archival materials available. As Boltin sarcastically noted, the authors ". . . cite around 250 [references], drawn from 80 different historical sources. This is not very many for a book with 500 pages."[47] Boltin also pointed out that the *Outline* contained some patent falsehoods; for example, there were no counterblows on the flanks of the Germans during the attack on Minsk early in the summer of 1941 contrary to the *Outline's* account.[48] According to Boltin, the role of

[46] *Voennyi vestnik*, No. 4, 1956, pp. 2-9, as cited in John Erikson, *The Soviet High Command* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 751n.

[47] E.A. Boltin and A.S. Filippov, *"Ser'eznye nedostatki 'Ocherkov istorii velikoi otechestvennoi voiny'"* (Serious Deficiencies in 'An Outline of the History of the Great Patriotic War') *Voprosy istorii*, No. 5, (May, 1956), p. 151.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 147. More deliberate falsifications of economic facts are outlined on pp. 152 and 155.

Stalin also was overemphasized in the *Outline* and he stated that more credit should be given to the heroic efforts of the Soviet people.[49] Nor was this an end to the attacks on the Stalinist interpretations of the Great Patriotic War.

The July issue of *Kommunist* contained an article entitled "One Must Profoundly Study the History of the Great Patriotic War", which was an even more explicit statement of the new wave of military history. In this article, it was admitted that the responsibility for the defence of Moscow ". . . was handed over to comrades Zhukov and Bulganin by the Party. . ."[50] while the ". . . mobilization of the masses was carried out by the Moscow Party committee headed by A.S. Shcherbakov."[51] Still, the credit for the counterblows at Moscow, initiated in December, 1941, remained unassigned with only the fact noted that the Germans were driven back "300-400 kilometers" to the west. The dangerous facets of the cult of the individual were also enumerated, with a special warning that to assign all credit to Stalin for the victories was to distort the true situation. As well as this caveat, a specific list of cammanders singled out for their contributions to the Soveit victory was added, including the names of Zhukov and Rokossovskii.[52] Nevertheless, it was noted that much credit must still be given to the Soveit people and to the Communist

[49]This is suggested by the very tone of the article, and its frequent mention of the heroic defence of the Fatherland.

[50]B. Evstigneev *et. al.*, *"Glybzhe izuchat'"*, p. 67.

[51]*Ibid.*, p. 68.

[52]*Ibid.*, p. 73.

Party.

Another onerous blow fell on the concept of active defence as it was interpreted in the Stalinist accounts of the defence of Moscow in a book called *Important Operations of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945, Collected Articles*. In it, the authors stated

> . . . in the early period of the war the German-Fascist army gained the initiative, occupied enormous amounts of territory, sliced through to the essential centres of the nation, and achieved great successes. The combat operations of the Soviet forces during this period were retreating actions and not active defence measures as is wrongly proclaimed in our literature.[53]

This accusations was echoed by E.A. Bolton in the January, 1957 edition of *Voprosy istorii*. In an article called "The Victory of the Soviet Army at Moscow in 1941", he stated ". . . the plan for active defence [before Moscow] did not exist . . . they [the Soviet forces] were driven back by the enemy force."[54]

Boltin further went on to blame the poor showing of the Soviet forces on the unpreparedness of the Soviet Army, which was cuased, in part, he argued by the purges of 1937-1938.[55] Boltin's article also added a new dimension to the previous discussions of the battle for Moscow. For, while the article continued in the tradition of Tel'pukhovskii's book in not discussing the mechanism of the Soviet response to

[53] P.A. Zhilin, ed. *Vazhneishie operatsii Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941-1945. Sbornik statei.* (Important Operations of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945. Collected Articles) (Moscow: *Voenizdat*, 1956)., p.11. As translated in Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, p. 814.

[54] E.A. Boltin, *Pobeda sovetskoi armii pod Moskvoi v 1941 godu*", (The Victory of the Soviet Army at Moscow in 1941) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 21.

[55] *Ibid*

the German advance; for the first time individual armies, regiments, and commanders were identified by number and name. Thus, tantalizing bits of information were provided--for example, it was noted that Zhukov replaced Konev as commander of the West Front, defending Moscow, in October--but there was no analysis of the importance of this information.[56] Nevertheless, limited as this article was, it was a clear advance over the pallid accounts which had been prevalent until this time. Particularly interesting in Boltin's account of the battle for Moscow was his allocation of the credit for the victory. Rather than emphasize the importance of the role of the Party or the Soviet people as had been the case in previous post-Stalinist histories, Boltin primarily credited the military Supreme High Command.[57] Such an interpretations was fascinating, for it opposed the prevalent Party view that success was largely due to the people of Moscow as led by the Party. This article marked the high-water point of historical revision of the Great Patriotic War in *Voprosy istorii* in the aftermath of the Twentieth Congress and perhaps indicated that scholarly debate had overstepped the prescribed bounds of permitted investigation. The fact that *Voprosy istorii* favoured the military against the Party at the same time when Khrushchev was beginning to suspect Zhukov and his clique of Bonapartism was certainly one of the reasons for the curbs place on *Voprosy istorii* subsequently.

Nevertheless, the stuggle over the history of the battle for

[56]See *ibid.*, p. 55.

[57]*Ibid.*, p. 32.

Moscow was continued in the journals controlled by and under the auspices of the military as the criticisms and revisions of the history of the Great Patriotic War continued throughout the first half of 1957. *Krasnaia zvezda* of June 19, 1957, stated that one-man command in 1941-42, namely Stalin's, left a great deal to be desired from the point of view of military efficiency.[58] A month later, the same journal added that "it is necessary to eliminate entirely the harmful effects of the cult of the individual [Stalin] on military affairs.[59] However, despite these attempts at revision in the military journals, the year 1957 also marked the introduction of a strong reactionary trend in the historical atmosphere of the Soviet Union.

This was due to the events in Eastern Europe in 1956, which were so disastrous to the Soviet prestige in that area and abroad that they culminated in the need to retreat somewhat from the radical position of the secret speech. This retrenchment also had its repercussions in the field of Soviet historical studies.[60] *Voprosy istorii*'s hitherto exclusive hold on Party history was curbed to some extent by the creation of a new journal, *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, charged primarily with the evaluation of Party history, a move designed to curb the power of *Voprosy istorii* by providing it with a rival. As well, the revisionist tone of *Voprosy istorii* was muted by the death of Pankratova and the replacement of the remainder of the editorial board in June of that same

[58]As cited in Erikson, "Zhukov, Krushchev and the Red Army", p. 51.

[59]As cited in Cocks, "The Purge of Marshal Zhukov", p. 486.

[60]For a discussion, see Heer, *Politics and History*, p. 69.

year, as their replacements were more tractable and conservative figures.

Strangely enough, that same year also marked the apogee of the cooperation between Khrushchev and Zhukov. Khrushchev's defeat of the "anti-Party group" of Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov in their attempt to unseat him as First Party Secretary was achieved with the aid of Zhukov and the resources of the military organization. As a reward for his aid, Zhukov was made a full member of the Central Committee, the first military man (excluding the political generals like Bulganin) to be so honored. But this situation, with its seeming equality of the political apparatus and the military, proved to be ephemeral.

In October, 1957, Zhukov, upon return from a state visit to Yugoslavia, found out that in his absence he had been removed as a member of the Central Commitee and relieved of his command of the Soviet armed forces.[61] The fall of Zhukov, along with the mood of *recueillement* evidenced in *Voprosy istorii* in the wake of the editorial changes, signalled an end to the era of large-scale change, favouring the *Stavka*, in the writing of Soviet military history. However, this did not mean the end of the revision of Soviet histories, but merely a change in the group which would be the recipient of the benefits from the revisions. The trend which had begun in the aftermath of Stalin's death and had flourished in the political uncertainty which had existed until 1957, became less adventuresome and more controlled by political, rather than military, figures in the following period.

[61]An excellent discussion of the fall of Zhukov and the charges officially laid against him can be found in Cocks, "The Purge of Marshal Zhukov", pp. 483-98.

The elimination of the "anti-Party group" and the ouster of Zhukov meant that Khrushchev's political supremacy was unchallenged, leading to a lessening of the political tension which in turn meant a restriction on the amount of academic play which was permitted. The timing of Zhukov's removal has been well explained by Conquest, who writes:

> When the situation was fluid in 1953, his [Zhukov's] support seemed necessary. But once he was in a position of strength it became even more necessary . . . until he was, to all appearance, so strong as to represent a real dange to Party rule in its present form. This happened at the same time that his support was no longer needed,all other factions and power centres having been crushed.[62]

This comment is particulary apt when applied to the role of Zhukov in histories of the battle for Moscow. Such articles as that by Boltin which tended to augment the already substantial prestige of Marshal Zhukov by glorifying his role in the war must have seemed ominous to a Khrushchev worried by the power of his military Commander-in-Chief.

In this same vein, it can be seen that the attempts of Khrushchev, first to undermine Zhukov's power base in the Army and then, after the latter's fall, to re-write history in such a fashion as to lessen the importance of Zhukov and the *Stavka* commanders, by emphasizing the later parts of the war, had a two-fold purpose. The first was designed to eliminate a potential political rival, but the second was an attempt to legitimise the entire Krushchev regime. The need to discredit Stalin had resulted in the secret speech, but the secret speech had served to cast doubts on all those associated with Stalin, including Khrushchev and his set. Consequently, Khrushchev's attempts to re-write history

[62]Conquest, *Power and Policy*, p. 345.

resulted from the fact, as one observer has stated, that "no portion of Stalin's reign since 1934 provided fertile ground in which to plant his [Khrushchev's] roots of leadership except the Great Patriotic War."[63] The curbing of the independence and initiative of *Voprosy istorii* into the investigation of the Great Patriotic War and the ouster of Zhukov from his influential position as Minister of Defence and member of the Central Commitee meant that historical studies in the Soviet Union thereafter were to be tied firmly to the rule of the Party as personified by Khrushchev. The only question which remained to be answered was to what extremes Khrushchev could and would go to solidify his control of the historical processes and hence his own position among the Party's chosen, and how accounts of the battle of Moscow would fare in this process.

CHAPTER THREE

THE KHRUSHCHEV ERA

(1957-1964)

"Historians are dangerous people. They are capable of upsetting everything. They must be directed."

N.S. Khrushchev, 1956.

In the late fall of 1957, Khrushchev's position in the Soviet Union was more stable than ever before. The disturbing events in Eastern Europe of the preceding year had come to an end, the "anti-Party group" had been crushed in the spring of 1957, and Marshal Zhukov, Khrushchev's only remaining potential opponent, had been removed in October of than same year. As well as these political successes, there were other auspicious omens for the First Secretary. The virgin lands program which Khrushchev had begun had proved initially successful and the 1957 harvest was bountiful, eliminating the need for any capital outlay for the purchase of foreign grains. Moreover, the Soviet Union's prestige abroad had been enormously enlarged by the successful launching of the first earth satellite, *Sputnik*, in October, 1957, a prestige which reflected upon Khrushchev. Thus the future seemed to be securely in his hands and attention could be turned to providing an historical basis for continued success by destroying the prestige of Stalin as a military leader and by preventing Zhukov and the *Stavka* generals from inheriting this prestige.

The fall of Marshal Zhukov had several important effects on the writing of history, especially that of the Great Patriotic War, in the Soviet Union. In order to appreciate these effects, it is necessary to examine the official charges which were laid against Zhukov. These charges, which were published in *Pravda* as a resolution of the Central Committee, accused Zhukov of promoting his own cult within the Army, of misdirecting the Army in military science and in organization, of attempting to reduce the Party's control over the Army, and of being

guilty of "adventurism" and Bonapartism.[1] The accusation which contributed the most to Zhukov's removal was contained in the imputation that he was attempting to reduce Party control of the military and hence increase his own authority.[2] Zhukov's very real attempt to reduce the amount of Party control over the Army undoubtedly raised Khrushchev's suspicions that Zhukov was planning a Bonapartist role for himself. Khrushchev's insistence that the Army be made subservient to the will of the Party was indicated clearly in an unsigned editorial published later in that same year by *Kommunist*. This editorial stated that the "Party . . . cannot leave the armed forces outside its field of vision; leadership of them cannot be outside the control of the Party and of its Central Committee."[3] While these were the prime reasons for Zhukov's removal, the other charges were important for the changes which they signalled in the writing of Soviet military history.

[1] *Pravda*, November 3, 1957, p. 1.

[2] The purge of Zhukov is discussed ably in Paul M. Cocks, "The Purge of Marshal Zhukov," *Slavic Review*, XXII (September, 1963), pp. 483-98. This articles examines the official charges against Zhukov and concludes that "the Army . . . became a potential threat to his [Khrushchev's] power . . . . Thus the charge of Bonapartism, whether real or unreal, can be seen as expressing the compelling reason for Zhukov's removal." (p. 497).

A differing view is found in Herman F. Akhminov, "Neo-Stalinism and the Fall of Marshal Zhukov," *Analysis of Current Developments in the Soviet Union*, No. 30 (1957), pp. 2-6, in which the author rejects the idea that either a personal clash with Khrushchev or the politics of a power struggle between the Army and the Party led to Zhukov's fall. Akhminov argues "It is . . . unfounded to assume that the Soviet Army is an independent political organism, capable of pitting itself against the state," (p. 2) and advances the idea that Zhukov's ouster should be viewed as part of the post-Stalin vaccilation between collective and individual leadership.

[3] Unsigned editorial, "*Kommunisticheskaia Partiia--rukovodiashchaia sila sovetskogo obshchestva*," (The Communist Party--Guiding Force of Soviet Society) *Kommunist*, No. 16 (1957), p. 10.

The suggestion that Zhukov was attempting to promote his own cult had particular significance for historians. According to the Central Committee,

> Zhukov's person and role in the Great Patriotic War were excessively glorified. Thus to please Comrade Zhukov the true history of the war was distorted . . . and the leading and inspiring role of the Communist Party was belittled.[4]

This statement was framed in such a fashion as to associate the cult of Zhukov with that of Stalin and hence blacken the former's reputation. As well, it indicated that histories of the Great Patriotic War were no longer to emphasize the role of Zhukov when discussing events like the battle for Moscow and foreshadowed a new approach to military history in the Khrushchev period, an approach which would emphasize the role of Khrushchev and his followers in the war at the expense of Zhukov and the *Stavka*.

The charges against Zhukov also were supplemented by sources other than the Party, most notably from Marshals Konev and Malinovskii. In a bitter personal attack on Zhukov, Konev alleged that Zhukov was excessively autocratic, had diminished the role of regulations by personal whim, and had attempted to over-emphasize his own role in the war. As well, he intimated that the early failures of the war were in part the responsibility of Zhukov who, in his position as Chief of General Staff in 1941, should have been able to affect a better defence.[5] Malinovskii, in a speech at the Frunze military academy, took Zhukov to task

[4]As cited in Cocks, "The Purge of Marshal Zhukov," p. 483.

[5]Marshal of the Soviet Union, I. S. Konev, *Pravda*, November 3, 1957, p. 4.

for failing to pay sufficient attention to the role of atomic weapons.[6] While Konev's charges can be dismissed in part as revenge for personal enmities incurred during the war, they also were important in indicating the new direction of Soviet historical writings.[7] It was now clear that the credit for the victories in the war was no longer to fall exclusively on the military and particularly on the *Stavka* commanders. Instead, under Khrushchev's auspices, there was to be an intensification of the campaign, carried on sporadically since 1955, to emphasize the role of the Front commanders and political commissars at the expense of the members of *Stavka*.

This approach was adopted immediately by the newly established *Voprosy istorii KPSS* in an article called "The Communist Party--Organizor of the Soviet Army," by N. I. Shatagin.[8] After a discussion of the evolution of the Red Army in the days of the revolution, the article went on to note that

> In the years of the Great Patriotic War, the Communist Party again united the Soviet people shoulder to shoulder, organized and directed them towards a single goal, victory over fascism.[9]

The article gave all credit for the victory to the efforts of the CPSU and its delegates, pointedly ignoring the military except as members and

[6]Marshal of the Soviet Union, A. Malinovskii, *Krasnaia zvezda*, November 21, 1957, p. 1.

[7]Konev felt that Stalin had favoured Zhukov over him and had therefore allowed Zhukov to command the prestigious final advance on Berlin.

[8]N. I. Shatagin, *"Kommunistiia partiia--organizator sovetskoi armii,"* (The Communist Party--Organizor of the Soviet Army) *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 1 (1958), pp. 10-28.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 27.

representatives of the Party. The article then turned on Zhukov for his attempts to weaken Party influence within the Army.

> The Central Committee of the CPSU, true to the Leninist principle of the primacy of the Party over the military, in a resolution at the October (1957) plenum, decided to upgrade, as far as possible, Party organization . . . in the country's armed forces. The Party dondemned the dangerous influences of the former USSR Minister of Defence, G. K. Zhukov, as going against the Party line and the Leninist principles for the establishing of military forces.[10]

Here, then was a clear statement to all historians of the official interpretation of the Great Patriotic War as to the line they must take thereafter regarding Zhukov's role in the battle for Moscow, as well as a new definition of Party-military relations in which the latter was subordinated to the former.

Nor was the repression of objective truth in the period following the elimination of the "anti-Party group" and the ouster of Zhukov confined solely to historical studies. The concept of *partiinost'* was to be the guideline for all Soviet thinkers. In *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Khrushchev outlined the correct slant to be taken when he stated: "The question of his [a writer's] approach to reality is clear . . . . The truthful presentation of life from the point of view of *partiinost'* is the necessity of his soul . . . ".[11] In addition to this pronouncement, Khrushchev purged the editorial boards of two liberal magazines, *Literaturnaia Moskva* and *Novy mir* in 1958, ensuring that more pliable men

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[11] *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 28, 1957, as cited in A. Rothberg, *The Heirs of Stalin* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 22.

would hold the key positions.

The concrete results of the new approach to the history of the Great Patriotic War was manifested by the publication in 1958 of the first major monograph on the battle for Moscow since Zhukov's removal.[12] In the opening chapter of this work, the author, A. M. Samsanov, outlined the new Soviet view of the battle. The major credit for the victory was due neither to Stalin nor to the generals. Instead, victory was the product of

> . . . the Communist Party and its Central Committee which, during the battles which took place against the Hitlerite army in its advance on the Soviet capital, organized the powerful material and moral resources of our Motherland.[13]

Samsanov also debunked the theories of "reactionary historians" in capitalist countries who underestimated the heroism of the Russian people and attributed the German defeat to ". . . the severe Russian winter with its strong frost."[14] Samsanov pointed out, and reasonably so, that ". . . the weather of the fall and winter of 1941: the *rasputitsa*, the heavy snowfall, and the frosts acted upon both military forces, not only the enemy military forces."[15]

Samsanov's work was more than just a refutation of bourgeois scholarship. As well, it also probed for the reasons behind the shocking Soviet failures, both in the battle for Moscow and in the opening

[12] A. M. Samsanov, *Velikaia bitva pod Moskvoi. 1941-1942 g.* (The Great Battle at Moscow, 1941-1942) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo, Akad. Nauk SSSR, 1958).

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

stages of the war. Stalin and the military hierarchy were called to task for the poor preparation of the Soviet Army in the era before the war. The failure to evaluation properly the significance of the factor of surprise was emphasized particularly. "Soviet military art in the prewar period taught improperly the feasibility of strategic surprise in war."[16] Thus, the criticism of Stalin's evaluation of surprise which had been begun in 1954 as a military heresy had, by 1958, become part of the orthodox Party analysis of the war.

The rehabilitation of the reputations of those who had been lost in the purges of the 'thirties, which had begun after the Twentieth Party Congress, continued in Samsanov's evaluation of the Soviet failures. Following the line of Boltin's earlier work,[17] it was acknowledged that not only were many of those purged innocent, but also that "this phenomenon [the purge] was one of the principal reasons for the failure of our forces in the first period of the war."[18] The closeness of Samsanov's book and Boltin's article in their approach to the battle is remarkable, with Samsanov citing Boltin for factual support.[19]

Curiously, however, the political changes which occurred during the year between the publication dates of the two accounts was not clearly reflected by differences in the two. As has been noted previously, in Boltin's article the credit for the victory at Moscow had

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[17] E. A. Boltin, *"Pobeda sovetskoi armii pod Moskvoi v 1941 godu,"* (The Victory of the Soviet Army at Moscow in 1941) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 1 (January, 1957), pp. 21-55.

[18] Samsanov, *Velikaia bitva*, pp. 36-37.

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE 21074 THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE	AUTHOR/AUTEUR NEILSON, K.E.	TITLE/TITRE THE BATTLE FOR MOSCOW, 1941: THE SOVIET-VIEW.

been given to the military.[20] This approach should have been out of place in the post-Zhukov era and have been replaced by an interpretation which passed the credit to the field commanders and to their political commissars. However, this was not particularly evident; for example, in Samsanov's discussion of the origin of the December counterblows he wrote

> The Soviet Surpeme High Command began to prepare a plan for the destruction of the German fascist forces in front of Moscow and to determine its practical feasability . . . . On November 30 the Commander of the West Front, a representative of the Supreme High Command [that is, Zhukov], presented I. V. Stalin with an analysis of the situation at the Front and with suggestions for the organization of the counterblows.[21]

While Zhukov was referred to by positon only, and while Stalin's role in the military planning was reduced, this account still gave substantial credit to the *Stavka* for the creation of the plan for the counterblows. This suggests that Khrushchev wished to advance cautiously in his revamping of history to its new form which would emphasize the role of the Party and field commanders.

In a concluding chapter, Samsanov outlined the new Soviet analysis of the results of the battle. The disastrous defeats of October and November, with their resultant enormous losses in troops and material, were explained not as the consequence of improper command decisions but as deliberate delaying tactics which resulted in giving the Soviets time to organize the defences at Moscow.[22] The victory at Moscow also was

[20] See above, p. .

[21] Samsanov, *Velikaia bitva*, p. 170.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

seen as an important turning point in the flow of the war, a point after which there was a ". . . resulting transferral of the strategic initiative from the hands of the enemy to the Soviet Army (temporarily lost again in the spring of 1942, [while] the destruction of the enemy at Moscow was a serious blow to the morale of the German soldiers and officers . . . ".[23] This was a strange view as Khrushchev and his followers were prominent at Stalingrad and tended to emphasize this latter battle as the truly decisive engagement of the eastern front. Yet in the end, Samsanov gave the over-all credit for the Soviet victory to the ". . . socialist economy and the moral-political unity of the people . . . " as guided by the CPSU.[24]

In essence, Samsanov's interpretation of the battle for Moscow was not significally different from that of Tel'pukhovskii in 1955 or Boltin in 1957.[25] Although there was a pointed lack of reference to Zhukov by name, the events were portrayed very similarly in all works. Once again, the emphasis was on the refutation of Western claims that German mistakes, not Soviet initiatives, were the deciding factors in the battle. As well, there was the continued firm insistence that the outcome of the war predetermined by the intrinsic superiority of the Communist system as controlled by the CPSU of which Khrushchev had been one of the leading lights and was now the main figure. The only

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] B. S. Tel'pukhovskii *et. al.* eds, *Ocherki istorii velikoi otchestvennoi voiny. 1941-1945.* (An Outline of the History of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo, Akad. Nauk SSSR, 1955).

significant change in the new accounts was a growing use of archival material as evidence for these assertions, along with a growing sophistication in presentation. Only in the Party dominated journal, *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, was there a simultaneous and continuing attempt by the CPSU to subordinate the role played in the war by the military to that of the Party.

This attempt by the Party, as typified by Shatagin's article in the January, 1958, issue of *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, was continued in the same journal by B. S. Tel'pukhovskii.[26] While outlining the dominant role played by the Party in the defence of Moscow, Tel'pukhovskii pointedly ignored the role of the Army and of Zhukov in particular. However, such an approach was not typical of other publications on the Great Patriotic War. For example, a work also published in 1958, called *The Second World War, 1939-1945*, still mentioned Zhukov by name as the commander of the mid-December counter-blows at Moscow.[27] But, this book did exemplify the new Soviet trend to a greater use of archival material, for when it countered the German claim that the Soviet forces at Moscow enjoyed a numerical superiority it cited the archives of the Ministry of Defence to back up this rebuttal.[28]

[26]B. S. Tel'pukhovskii, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiia--vdokhnovitel' i organizator pobedy sovetskogo naroda v velikoi otechestvennoi voine,"* (The Communist Party--Leader and Organizor of the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War) *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 2 (1958), pp. 34-56.

[27]S. P. Platonov, N. G. Pavlenko, and I. V. Parotkin, eds, *Vtoraia Mirovaia Voina 1939-1945* (The Second World War, 1939-1945) (Moscow: Voenno-istoricheskii ocherk, 1958), pp. 258-59.

[28]*Ibid.*, pp. 250-51.

Nevertheless, this relative diversity of thought found in Soviet histories of the war appearing in 1957 and 1958 was not an indication that Khrushchev was about to encourage such a wide spectrum of historical interpretation. Despite the claim advanced in *Kommunist* that there was to be no more ". . . distortion of historical truth to suit a political situation", Khrushchev fully intended to establish a single line of historical writing.[29] In 1959, the first volume of a porjected six-volume history of the Great Patriotic War was published,[30] a history with the avowed purpose of showing ". . . the role of the Communist Party as organizor of the nationwide struggle against the enemy."[31] This jointly-prepared series was designed to provide a uniform, party-approved answer to the delicate problems of interpretation and to stifle any dissident opinions.

The History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union was a signal event in the writing of Soviet military history. The massive archives and records of the Ministry of Defence, hitherto utilized only in an haphazard fashion in scattered articles and monographs, were systematically exploited to provide a thorough examination of the war. As well, the new history provided Soviet citizens with an authoritative account of the greatest achievement of the CPSU and the Soviet people,

[29]E. Zhukov, *"Istoriia i sovremennost,"* (History and the Present) *Kommunist*, No. 11 (1959), p. 46.

[30]Institute of Marxism-Leninism, *Istorii Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny sovetskogo soiuza 1941-1945 gg. (v shesti tomakh)* (The History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union in Six Volumes) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1959-1962). (Hereafter cited as *The History*).

[31]*Pravda*, September 29, 1957, as cited in Cocks, "The Purge of Marshal Zhukov," p. 485.

an account which promised to be a more factual one than had been available in the Stalinist period. Of course, this work was also designed to advance the politcal fortunes of N. S. Khrushchev by increasing the imprtance of his role in the Great Patriotic War and thereby providing him with a past which would be commensurate with his present position of supreme authority.

In its discussion of the battle for Moscow, *The History* provided no startling revelations. While a good deal of new information was provided, *The History* did not vary from the interpretations established in the years since Stalin's death in its discussion of the battle for Moscow. Although it was true that Zhukov was mentioned only in passing, it was also true that little blame was attached to him for the early failures of the war.[32] The same approach was taken with regard to Stalin. In the account of Stalin's role in the battle, he was reduced to one of the many figures who followed the bidding of the Party. The trend to show the importance of the Field commanders as compared that of *Stavka* command was attempted but briefly in *The History*, for the close link between *Stavka* and the execution of the battle by the Soviet field forces at Moscow was so clear. The only way in which there could be a shift in emphasis in that context was a subtle one; a reminder that

[32]For a discussion of the charitable attitude taken towards Zhukov in *The History*, see Otto P. Chaney, "The resurrection of an Unperson (Marshal Zhukov)," *Army*, XVI (March, 1966), pp. 51-53. The entire phenomenon of the unperson is discussed in Warren Lerner, "The Unperson in Communist Historiography, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXV (1966), pp. 438-47.

> the world-historical victory of the Red Army at Moscow was indissolubly linked with the self-sacrificing struggle of the Soviet forces on other, connected Fronts.[33]

Obviously, unlike the southern sectors, where Khrushchev and his cronies were actively engaged, the battle for Moscow provided no grounds for a political alteration of the facts of military command. However, later volumes of *The History*, which dealt with Stalingrad, made it clear that the South Front was the key to the war and that Stalingrad was the turning point in the war.

The evaluation of the Soviet situation in September, 1941, prior to the beginning of *Typhoon*, contained in *The History* was a realistic, if optimistic, one. The Soviets admitted that the situation was far from rosy, stating "it is true that the military forces were being bolstered with more and more new aircraft, tanks, and artillery . . . but these were not enough [to stem the German advance] . . . ".[34] However, there was a curious note to the discussion of the Nazi pause in September, before the beginning of the advance on Moscow. *The History* stated that

> In the fall of 1941, the Red Army broke up, for the first time, the Hitlerite breakthrough towards Moscow. Thanks to this, the Soviet people had more time to organize the defences of Moscow . . . .[35]

This was a clear case of assigning credit to the Red Army for events which were the result of command decisions within the German army.

[33] *The History*, II, p. 209.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

Among the new information revealed in *The History* was a more detailed account of the relative strengths of the two armies prior to the opening of the German advance.[36] Also, *The History* stated that the *Stavka* directive of 27 September prepared the Fronts for the oncoming German offensive.[37] This latter point seems difficult to accept, for the German surprise achieved at some points was so great that streetcars were still running.

The evaluation of the German encirclements at Viaz'ma and Briansk in the first weeks of October also remained in the previous Soviet tradition. Rather than view these events as disasters of the first magnitude, *The History* treated them as defensive manoeuvres, commenting

> Moscow suddenly found itself perfectly free from immediate enemy blows . . . . [allowing the Mozhaisk line to be built up with] battleworthy troops which travelled to Moscow from the Far East and from Central Asia, and even with reserve troops formed in the European parts of the Soviet Union . . . .[38]

There was a continuation of the historiographic conflict with German authors over the number of prisoners taken at Viaz'ma with the German claims of 663,000 prisoners dismissed as far too high.[39] This kind of

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 235. This account sets the German advantage as 1.4 times in troops, 2.2 times in tanks, 1.9 times in artillery and mortars, and 2.6 times in aircraft. In some sectors, an even greater advantage is claimed.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.

[39] This point is discussed in Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941-1945* (London: Barrie & Rockcliff, 1964), pp. 230-31n. Werth cites I. V. Boldin *et. al.*, eds, *Narodnoie opolcheniie Moskvu* (Moscow Home Guard) (Moscow: 1961) as stating that the German figures were

Soviet treatment was reminiscient of the Stalinist accounts which held that the entire retreat was part of a preconceived plan and not the result of German initiatives.

Once again, despite the promise inherent in the outline of *The History*, its description of the events was of the disappointing sort typical of previous Soviet histories. In general, while more details were mentioned, the accounts were more superficial than enlightening. Despite the fact that for the first time the text of an actual dispatch was quoted, the reasoning behind important decisions, as well as the wrangling that surely accompanied them, was ignored.[40] Furthermore, the desperate Soviet attempt to slow the German October advance, featuring the appointment of Zhukov to the command of the West Front was handled in the following unrevealing fashion:

> . . . the Government Defence Committee and *Stavka* headquarters, on the tenth of October, combined the Reserve and West Fronts. Command of the Front was given to General of the Army G. K. Zhukov. Deputy command of the Front was given to Lieutenant-General I. S. Konev.[41]

It was not mentioned as to why it was necessary for Zhukov to assume command, nor was it explained how this decision was arrived at.

This treatment of the Party as an omniscent entity, manifested through the decisions taken by GKO, was evidenced further by the

"a piece of German day-dreaming, or a deliberate deception calculated to extract decorations and promotions from the Fuhrer." *The History*, II, p. 245, adds later that Viaz'ma was an opportune event, stating that "the Supreme High Command utilized this time [gained at Viaz'ma] to lead the forces of the West Front to the Mozhaisk line before they could be encircled . . .", giving the impression that the Soviet action was due to an overall strategic plan of defence, a near revival of Stalin's concept of active defence.

[40] *The History*, II, p. 238.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

evaluation of the eventual success or failure of the installation of Zhukov as commander of the West Front and of the subsequent retreat to the Mozhaisk line. These two events were treated as positive moves towards an eventual victory rather than as measures forced by the exigencies of war. "As a result of these energetic moves by GKO and *Stavka*, within a week along the Mozhaisk line, there was created a new defence Front."[42] While such an account was favourable to the maintainance of the myth of Party infallability and was, indeed, partially true, it certainly did not reflect accurately the events of the time.

Another example of the distortion of events found in *The History* was the treatment given the great civilian panic in Moscow during the middle of October, 1941. Until it is understood that an admission of the panic is unacceptable to the CPSU, it is difficult to understand the large amount of space devoted in *The History* to the recounting of the heroism and patriotism of the Moscovites.[43] Any fleeting moments of anti-Soviet behavior were attributed to German agents. As the editorial of October 10 in *Pravda* warned, ". . . the enemy not only blows at the Front, but also through a wide net of agents . . . [hoping to produce] panic."[44] The evacuation of many government offices from Moscow in mid-October was said to be necessitated by the disruptive influence of nearby German forces. The declaration of a

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] The Party's tremendous efforts to mobilize Moscow fully are discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 243-44, while contemporary letters and speeches of Moscovites, selected to illustrate the fervide patriotism of the city are in *ibid.*, p. 249.

[44] *Pravda*, October 10, 1941.

state of siege in Moscow, by order of GKO, was also explained by the fact that the Germans were within 100 to 120 kilometers of the city.[45] This latter event was, in reality, a result of the *bolshoi drap* and the looting of mid-October and not of the nearness of the German forces. This aversion of the CPSU to admit that there was a panic in Moscow in the fall of 1941 seems strange, when in earlier works of fiction, like Simonov's *The Living and the Dead*, there were already published accounts of it.[46]

The end of the first German advance on Moscow (by early November) was evaluated by *The History* in typical fashion. The German claim that the late rains eliminated their mobility and prevented further victories was ignored; rather, *The History* asserted that "by the end of October the German-fascist blows at Moscow in the region of the West Front were choked off. The Soviet defences had stabilized."[47] In the estimation of *The History*, the failure of the first blows was due to the heroism of the Red Army, the delaying efforts at Briansk and Viaz'ma, the tremendous efforts of the Soviet working class, and the superb organizational efforts of GKO, *Stavka*, and the Moscow Party organization.[48] Also, the breathing space provided by the German hesitation from November 1 to the resumption of the advance on the fif-

[45] *The History*, II, pp. 247-48.

[46] The panic is discussed in a manner sympathetic to the Soviet interpretation in Werth, *Russia at War*, pp. 230-39. Simonov's novel is mentioned on pp. 234-36.

[47] *The History*, II, p. 250.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

teenth was said to have been utilized to strengthen the West Front.[49]

The second German attack on Moscow was portrayed as a desperate German attempt to salvage a doomed campaign. The possibility of temporary German success was very small, according to *The History*, as supply and manpower factors had begun to swing in favour of the Red Army.[50] In its view, despite the numerical superiority of the Germans on the eve of November 16 (contrary to the German assertion of Soviet superiority), Soviet reserves were growing rapidly. As well, Soviet counterblows initiated at the end of November and the beginning of December were beginning to wrest the strategic initiative away from the German forces. Further, the German supply lines were too long for efficient transport while the Soviet factories, disrupted at the beginning of the war and evacuated to the East, were starting to produce once again. Finally, the tenacious Soviet defence had reduced the German rate of advance from its highpoint of 20-30 kilometers per day to less than 3.5 kilometers per day. This resulted in higher German casualties, with *The History* claiming the destruction of twenty-six German divisions and thirteen brigades with an overall estimate of 750,000 German casualties.

While the publication of *The History* was designed to produce a standard history of the war, Khrushchev also felt secure enough in his position to publish, in 1959, a new version of the *History of the*

[49]It is interesting to note that credit for the formation of six new reserve Armies in November, 1941, was alloted to GKO.

[50]The factors are discussed in *The History*, II, pp. 265-66.

Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[51] This new version was the first serious replacement for Stalin's *Short History* which had served as the Party gospel from 1939 to 1953, although there had been, in the interim from 1953 to 1959, a brief post-Stalinist outline history published by *Agitprop.*[52] The new history of the CPSU followed the same line as that of *The History* with regard to the battle for Moscow. The emphasis was placed on the efforts of the Soviet people, under the guidance of the CPSU, in repelling the foreign aggressors.

> The Party called on the people to rend fullest assistance to the Red Army units defending the capital. The appeal of the Party and Government brought a ready response from the people. The defenders of Moscow displayed matchless heroism in repelling the numerous enemy attacks.[53]

In addition, the fact that Stalin was the First Secretary of the CPSU during this time was underplayed in this new history, with emphasis laid instead on the collective nature of the Party leadership.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the need to maintain the image of the infallibility of the CPSU, Stalin was not blamed directly for the early failures of the Soviet forces. In explaining the reasons for the initial setbacks, the new CPSU history failed to mention the "cult of the personality" and instead emphasized the increased German economic base resulting from the conquest of Europe; the fact that Germany could concentrate her forces against the Soviet Union, while Soviet

[51] B. N. Ponomariov, chief ed., *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960).

[52] The new history of the CPSU is analyzed in Bertram D. Wolfe, "The New Gospel According to Khrushchev," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVIII, No. 4 (1960), pp. 576-87.

[53] Ponomariov, *History of the CPSU*, p. 562.

forces were dispersed in Asia; the purges of the military in 1937/38; and the fact that "the suddenness of the German attack was an exceedingly important factor."[54]

At Moscow, *The History of the CPSU* stated, the German defeat resulted from things such as ". . . Red Army units [which] fought to the last for their country . . . . [While] powerful reserves of men and military equpment were bukIt up thanks to the selfless efforts of the people and to the immense organizing activity of the Party."[55] As a result of these factors, "the valiant struggle of the Red Army . . . changed the relation of forces on the decisive sector of the Front in favour of the USSR and cleared the ground for Soviet counteroffensives."[56] After the German army had been "bled white", the Soviet counterblows of December were launched resulting in the end of the fascist advance, which was now explained as only having been a temporary phenomenon. The new history of the CPSU was clearly designed to provide an explanation of the early failures which did not bear too heavily on the CPSU, to eliminate Stalin as the great military genius of the war, to establish the military as an arm of the State during the war, and to place the responsibility for victory in the war on the shoulders of the Russian people under the direction of the CPSU.

In considering these years, 1959 and 1960, it is impossible to follow the course of Soviet historiography without an examination of

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 547.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 564.

[56] *Ibid.*

Soviet foreign relations in that same period. Perhaps the most significant development of this period arose from the meeting between Mao Tse-tung and Khrushchev at Peking, late in 1959. From this meeting emerged the beginning of the Sino-Soviet split which persists until the present. Although this division was not revealed to the world until the winter of 1962-1963, a recent biographer of Khrushchev has claimed that "from 1960 onwards it was quite impossible to understand Khrushchev's foreign policy, and a good deal of his domestic policy too, except in the light of his life-and-death struggle with China . . . ".[57] Whether or not this view is a valid one, it was certain that the quarrel with China was one of the factors which Khrushchev considered when he moved positively once again into the realm of military strategy and its handmaiden, the history of past Soviet victories and defeats, in 1960.

In a speech to the Supreme Soviet on January 14, 1960, Khrushchev told the delegates that developments in military technology, especially in rocketry, had eliminated the need for a large conventional army and called for a reduction in the size of the Red Army of some 1.2 million men.[58] This move was followed closely by the removal of two conservative senior officers, Chief of Staff Sokolovskii and Commander of the Warsaw Pact forces, I. S. Konev.[59] The release of these two

[57]Edward Crankshaw, *Khrushchev: A Career* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), p. 277.

[58]*Pravda*, January 15, 1960, pp. 1-5.

[59]For a discussion of these removals, see Richard F. Staar, "Current Soviet Military Strategy," *Naval War College Review*, XVIII (January, 1966), p. 4.

remnants of Zhukov's tenure as Minister of Defence meant that eleven out of fourteen of the senior posts in the military hierarchy now belonged to members of the "Stalingrad group", that group of Front and field commanders whose wartime experience had been obtained in the southern secotrs along with Khrushchev and who gave their allegiance to him.[60] One of the members of this group, Minister of Defence Malinovskii, was quick to support Khrushchev's line, arguing that missiles have ". . . a decisive influence in changing the [military] situation in our favour . . . . Missiles are the most effective of all earlier and presently existing means of war".[61] Whatever the reason for Khrushchev's call for a new approach in Soviet military thinking, this move touched off a strategic debate unparalleled since the days immediately following Stalin's death.[62] This subsequent debate exacerbated the old quarrels between the Party and the military, quarrels which inevitably found their expression in the field of military history and the question of the battle for Moscow in that field.

[60]See Richard F. Staar, "Soviet Political Military Strategy," *Marine Corps Gazette*, XLIX (October, 1965), p. 22.

[61]As cited in Herbert S. Dinerstein, "Current Soviet Strategic Ideas," *Soviet Survey*, (October-December, 1960), p. 76.

[62]In *ibid.*, Dinerstein sees the new strategy as evidence that Khrushchev had eliminated, or was in a position to eliminate, all opposition to the new approach and was consolidating his hold on the military. Kenneth R. Whiting, "The Debate Between Khrushchev and His Marshals," *Air University Quarterly Review*, XVI (March-April, 1965), pp. 72-73, views the new strategy as a consequence of the need to divert capital to other sectors of the economy and of the fact that the Soviet Union was moving into a period, where due to the losses which occurred in the Great Patriotic War, there was a lack of young men of suitable military age. A further view, that of Nikolai Galay, "Khrushchev's Military Doctrine," *Analysis of Current Developments in the Soviet Union*, No. 213 (1962), pp. 4-5, suggest that Khrushchev's strategical

Unfortunately for Khrushchev, he had chosen a poor time for the introduction of a new strategic approach. The U-2 incident of May, 1960, and the Berlin crisis of 1961 both indicated that the new weaponry alone was not an effective tool for the achievement of Soviet foreign policy aims. As a result, despite Khrushchev's apparent domination of the military hierarchy through his set of "Stalingrad men", there developed several new factions which were quick to remonstrate with him for his new strategy.[63] While Malinovskii was overtly a Khrushchev man, the Minister of Defence attempted to act as an intermediary between Khrushchev and the disaffected military. In his speech of 23 October, 1961, Malinovskii attempted to unite the disparate wings of Soviet military thought.

> Although nuclear weapons will hold the decisive place in future war, we are nevertheless coming to the conclusion that final victory over an aggressor can be achieved only through combined operations by all branches of the armed forces . . . . any future war would be waged, despite enormous losses, by mass, many-million strong armed forces.[64]

Nevertheless, while the military discontent with Khrushchev's new views simmered, they did not make themselves immediately felt in the Soviet military histories concerning the battle for Moscow.

Thus, in 1961, the thirtieth anniversary of the battle, two articles which were published did little to indicate any change in the

switch was a temporary one, designed to exploit an evancescent technological superiority.

[63]Curt Gasteyger, "Modern Warfare and Soviet Strategy," *Survey*, No. 57 (October, 1965), pp. 46-55, identifies three groups in the military debate: those who favour advanced technology at the expense of conventional weapons, those who favour a continued emphasis on tried and tested approaches, and a centrist group.

[64]Cited in Whiting, "The Debate," p. 73.

prevalent Party approach to the battle. The adventurism of the German blitzkrieg was duly noted by P. A. Zhilin in an article in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, with credit for the Soviet victory assigned to the CPSU and the government.[65] Another article, this time in *Voprosy istorii*, commemorating the Soviet victory at Moscow, merely reiterated stock views. The victory was a turning point, the first Soviet victory in the war; it ended the German strategic plan of conquest and the myth of Nazi invincibility; and gave heart to the conquered peoples of Europe. Credit for the victory was given to the leadership of the CPSU and to the heroism of the Soviet people.[66]

While these articles added little to Soviet views already published, a monograph published that same year under the editorship of V. N. Estigneev was more significant.[67] This book was especially noteworthy for its return to direct condemnation of Stalin for his failure to prepare the Soviet Union for the German invasion and thus for the battle of Moscow.

> An important reason for the failure [to prepare] was the fact that, knowing of the inevitable war with fascist Germany, I. V. Stalin made a definite error in evaluating the international relations which were fully developed towards war and also in underestimating the menace of fascist aggression and the treachery of fascism.[68]

[65] P. A. Zhilin, *"Fashistskii 'Blitzkrieg' i ego proval v 1941 godu,"* (The Fascist "Blitzkrieg" and Its Failure in 1941) *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, No. 3 (1961), pp. 20-33.

[66] F. I. Tamarov, *"Pouchitel'nyi urok istorii,"* (Significant Lesson of History) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 12 (1961), pp. 14-25.

[67] V. N. Evstigneev, chief ed., *Velikaia bitva pod Moskvoi. Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* (Great Battle at Moscow, Short Historical Sketch) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1961).

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

The infallibility of the Party was rescued by the covering note that such an error would not have occurred if the Leninist principle of collective leadership had been adhered to, but "I. V. Stalin . . . did not discuss war questions with other members of the TsK."[69]

Turning directly to the battle for Moscow, the book asserted that the initial German successes were due to the fact that Germany was bolstered by the economic resources of a conquered Western Europe, by the addition of non-German troops into the *Wehrmacht*, and by the scrupulous Soviet observance of the Nazi-Soviet pact which prevented certain military preparations.[70]

The victory at Moscow was similarly handled in completely orthodox fashion. Credit for the victory was given to the heroism of the people, the correctness of the shape of Soviet society, and the Soviet military forces, all under the guidance of the CPSU.

> The organization and inspiration of the struggle of the Soviet Army and all the Soviet people in the battle for Moscow came from the Communist Party which ensured the mobilization of all the reserves of the country for the destruction of the enemy as well as ensuring the extraordinary unity of the Soviet people in the solving of their problem.[71]

The results of the victory, like the other aspects of the battle, also were treated in the usual fashion.

Evstigneev's interpretation of the results of the battle renewed the familiar litany of previous histories. Due to the Soviet victory, the "Soviet Army . . . wrested the strategic initiative from

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

the invader's hands."[72] Also, the counterblows ". . . ended the German plan of 'lightning war' in the USSR and the myth of the invincible German army."[73] This work continued the Soviet refutation of Western claims that weather and other non-Soviet factors influenced the battle for the capital. The authors stated:

> Only falsificators of history [would argue] that the German defeat at Moscow resulted from hard frost, heavy snow, and bad transportation . . . . not winter but the military art of the Soviet forces [gave rise to the German defeat]. . .".[74]

Added to this comment was the rejection of any consideration that supplies from either the United States or Britain aided the Soviet cause to any significant extent.[75]

What was more interesting than these cliches was the Soviet assertion that the Moscow counterattacks were the product of the *Stavka* and part of a coherent plan of defence. Such an interpretation was evidenced by the statement that "the counterblows at Moscow made up an important part of the plan of the Supreme High Command for the Soviet military forces to destroy the German-fascist forces in the winter of 1941-1942."[76] Such a view of the counterblows combined with an apparent renewal of the old Stalinist claim of active defence reflected the continued strength of the military despite Khrushchev's attempts to weaken their position. Obviously, the attempts of *The History* to strip

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

the *Stavka* of the credit for the battle of Moscow had led to an increased irritation amongst the military which was reflected in their current historical writings, writings which Khrushchev's unstable political position made it impossible for him to completely suppress.

The clear evidence of the growing rift over the new strategy and hence over the history of the battle for Moscow between Khrushchev and the military finally came in 1962, with the publication of the work on military strategy edited by Marshal Sokolovskii.[77] While Sokolovskii's book itself steered a middle course in the "rockets versus men" controvery, the debate over the merits of the book indicated the depth of the quarrel between Khrushchev and the military over his favouring the rocket strategy.

A clear statement of the views of the conserative military figures was published elsewhere in an official military journal at the same time as *Military Strategy*, and in it, Colonel I. Sidel'nikov outlined the objections to the cutbacks in conventional forces favoured

[77]Marshal Sokolovskii, ed., *Voennaia strategiia* (Military Strategy) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1962). The appearance of the first comprehensive official book on strategy by a Soviet author since 1926 drew great attention in the West. The most thorough analysis of the book is contained in Robert D. Crane, ed., *Soviet Nuclear Strategy: A Critical Appraisal* (Washington: Center for Strategic Studies, 1963). The best short analysis, and one which covers some of the developments subsequent to the publication, is A. Edeen, "The Strategy Debate in the Soviet Union," *Cooperation and Conflict: Nordic Studies in International Politics*, II, pp. 1-15. Excellent coverage of the Soviet reaction to the Sokolovskii volume is provided by Vladimir Alafuzov, "On the Appearanoe of the Work *Military Strategy*," in R. D. Crane and W. Onacewicz, eds, *Soviet Materials on Military Strategy: Inventory and Analysis for 1963* (Washington: Center for Strategic Studies, 1964), pp. 45-92. A rather unique view of Sokolovskii's work is found in D. P. Yeuell Jr., "Shift in Soviet Strategy," *Military Review*, XLV, No. 6 (June, 1965), pp. 87-95, wherein the author argues that the entire book is a red-herring, designed to mislead Western strategists.

by Khrushchev.[78] In his sketch of the history of Soviet military doctrine, Sidel'nikov again advanced the military view that Stalin and Stalin alone was responsible for the debacle of 1941.

> In the early period of the war there was almost a complete absence of well-worked-out general principles and concepts about the waging of military actions . . . . The cult of the personality of Stalin resulted in enormous damage . . . Stalin committed the gravest errors in evaluating the situation on the eve of the Patriotic War.[79]

This statement was designed to fulfill a twofold purpose: first, it was intended to reject any charges of the military culpability for the failures of 1941 and, second, it was intended to suggest that such a debacle could re-occur if Khrushchev were to emulate Stalin and interfere in military matters. Modern war, the article went on to state, would be "rocket-nuclear," but other weapons, and especially the mass army, would be necessary for the achievement of victory.

Besides Sidel'nikov's article, there were other expressions of military discontent with Sokolovskii's views. These also were found in the professional journals, where the influence of the Party was generally at its lowest. A. Golubev, in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, damned *Military Strategy* with faint praise, noting that the book was important, but "insufficiently attentive . . . toward military history . . .".[80] By this, Golubev suggested that Sokolovskii had failed to

[78]Colonel I. Sidel'nikov, *"O sovetskoi voennoi doktrine,"* (Concerning Soviet Military Doctrine) *Krasnaia zvezda*, 11 May, 1962, pp. 2-3, as translated by Kenneth R. Whiting as "Red Star on Doctrine," *Air University Quarterly Review*, XIII, (Summer, 1962), pp. 142-50.

[79]*Ibid.*, p. 144.

[80]As cited in Alafuzov, "Soviet Materials," p. 72.

learn the lessons of the Great Patriotic War with its emphasis on the importance of combined arms and the mass army. Other reviews, particularly that of *Voennyi vestnik*, echoed this approach, taking Sokolovskii to task for his emphasis on rockets and rocketry, despite his rather mild championing of this view, and called for the continued dominance of conventional weapons.[81] The tendency of the military to act together to prevent Khrushchev from making budgetary cuts in one branch, the ground forces, reflected the military awareness of the need to provide a united front to the Party or else lose all independence of action. The military reation clearly showed that, despite Khrushchev's apparent ascendancy, there was strong opposition to his views on military strategy and to his interference in military affairs generally. Further, the very publication of these views also indicated that Khrushchev, unlike Stalin before him, was unable or unwilling to suppress entirely the dissident voices in the Soviet military establishment.

The year 1962 was marked by other connected developments in Soviet intellectual circles generally. A renewed round of de-Stalinization was initiated, a move which culminated in the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* as a serial in *Novy mir*. While the reasons for Khrushchev's decision to publish *Denisovich* remain obscure, it was undoubtedly influenced by a series of domestic and foreign policy setbacks which Khrushchev had recently undergone. In short succession, Khrushchev had been buffeted by the Cuban missile crisis, the Penkovsky spy case, an overt deterioration

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

in Sino-Soviet relations, a decline in economic growth, a poor harvest, and problems with his plan for restructuring the Party apparatus.[82] A move, such as the publication of *Denisovich*, together with a renewal of the attack on Stalin at the Twenty-second Party Congress, was designed to strengthen Khrushchev's position in the face of these setbacks. The professional historians utilized this new wave of de-Stalinization to renew their call for changes in the structure of the Soviet historical body. The 1962 conference on history, called to discuss new guidelines for de-Stalinization, brought to the surface the desire for more freedom, greater professionalism, and for discussion of the problems caused by the conflict between historical objectivity and orthodox Marxist, Party-line interpretations.[83]

Once again, as in Eastern Europe in 1956/57, Khrushchev found that his attack on Stalin had unleashed liberal forces which threatened to go beyond the acceptable limits of dissent, this time on the domestic scene and specifically in the intellectual establishment. Thus, late 1962 and early 1963 marked a swing to more conservative views in Soviet Party circles in reaction this intellectual discontent. However, despite the vehemence of Khrushchev's remarks concerning cultural trends which he felt were unacceptable, there was not a return to strict control, but rather a period of indecision and un-

[82]The reasons for Khrushchev's decision to permit *Denisovich* to be published are discussed in A. Rothberg, *The Heirs of Stalin, Dissidence and the Soviet Regime 1953-1970* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 56-60.

[83]The conference is discussed in Kurt Marko, "History and the Historians," *Survey*, No. 56 (July, 1965), pp. 71-82.

certainty in Party guidelines.[84]

This trend was illustrated by the career of Solzhenitsyn which remained suspended between official praise and censure. The failure of Solzhenitsyn to win the Lenin prize in April, 1964, was an indication of the retreat from full scale de-Stalinization, but the praise given to *Denisovich* in *Pravda* at the same time showed that there was to be no repression.[85]

While the debate in academic circles seemed to be stalemated, this was not the case in military circles during 1964. Khrushchev's announcement of further troop cuts for that year coupled with his continued support of missiles and missile troops deepened the split within the armed forces. The entire question of the evolution of military science and especially the problems raised by the development of nuclear weapons brought about a reflective analysis of postwar Soviet strategy, adding to the intellectual debate obviously in progress the likelihood that the military would support a new and more complete re-examination of the main tenets of the history of the Great Patriotic War and especially the early years.

Two articles published in the spring of 1964 brought these issues into sharp focus. In an article in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, Colonel I. Korotkov took the unprecedented step of admitting that Soviet strategical thought since the war was not a continuous flow of Party-inspired ideas but could be broken down into three phases. The first

[84]For an example of Khrushchev's crude comments on cultural trends which he did not approve of, see his remarks concerning modernist art made during a tour of an art exhibit in Moscow (December, 1962).

[85]A. Rothberg, *The Heirs*, pp. 96-102.

was from 1945 to 1954 and was unduly influenced by the cult of personality of Stalin; the second was from 1954 to 1956 and marked the opening of a renewed appraisal of strategy, while the third was from 1956 to the date of publication and featured a thorough analysis of the problems of military affairs.[86] In this article, Korotkov openly admitted that military strategy and military in previous times had been influenced by political considerations. Korotkov did, however, place himself on the side of the angels by stating that after the Twenty-second Party Congress

> . . . a major breakthrough took place in the methodology and methods of military history research. In contrast to the works of preceding years, which bore the imprint of the cult of personality and which . . . were simply a description of events without deep conclusions and syntheses, the . . . new projects are based . . . on profound analysis of events and facts.[87]

Such breakthroughs undoubtedly would include a deeper analysis of such crucial events as the battle for Moscow.

A second article, in *Kommunist Vooruzhennyk Sil*, echoed Korotkov's assumption of political influence on military strategy and history and went on to distinguish between military doctrine and military science.[88] In an exact reversal of the roles assigned in Stalinist times, the article described doctrine, the province of the Party, as a more-or-less subjective theory of war and its goals; while mil-

[86]Colonel I. Korotkov, *"O razvitiie sovetskoi voennoi teorii v poslevoennie gody,"* (Development of Soviet Military Theory in the Post-war World) *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 2 (1964), pp. 39-50.

[87]*Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

[88]Major-General S. Kozlov, *"Voennoi doktrine i voennoi nauk,"* (Military Doctrine and Military Science) *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 5 (March, 1964), pp. 9-15.

itary science, the realm of the armed forces, was said to be the means of establishing how to carry out the goals of military doctrine in the most objective and scientific fashion.[89] This distinction was extremely important, for it reflected the attempt of the military to create an area of military history and thus strategic thought and action free from political interference. The military's assertion that they, and only they, were competent to decide matters of military science, was a clear attack on Party interference in military affairs and evidence of growing discontent with Khrushchev and his policies.

While neither of these articles openly rejected the official military policy and the history of the past on which it was based, an overt break between Khrushchev and the armed forces came in the summer of 1964. In an article in *Krasnaia zvezda*, Marshal Rotmistrov stated that ". . . calculations based on the anticipated results of using a single new type of weapon alone can lead to erroneous conclusions."[90] This article was the dropping of the glove, a direct challenge to Khrushchev and the Party and final evidence of the fact that there existed differences between Khrushchev and the generals which could not be bridged over, and this loss of military support presaged the fall of the First Secretary in October, 1964.[91]

[89] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[90] Marshal of the Tanks, P. A. Rotmistrov, "Military Science and the Academies," *Krasnaia zvezda*, April 26, 1964, as cited in Thomas W. Wolfe, "Impact of Khrushchev's Downfall on Soviet Military Policy and Detente," in E. L. Dulles and R. D. Crane eds, *Detente: Cold War Strategies in Transition* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), p. 287.

[91] The best account of the fall of Khrushchev is Michael Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin, from Khrushchev's Decline to Collective Leadership* (London: Collins, 1969), pp. 364-428.

In retrospect, the Khrushchev era was one in which there was a continuing strong Party influence on the history of the war. The recurrent waves of de-Stalinization which followed the Twentieth Party Congress had a concommitant effect upon the writing of military histories, an effect which was resented by the professional military itself. Khrushchev's continued championing of the role of the commanders at the Fronts as opposed to those at *Stavka* and his interference with and emphasis upon those battles in which he personally participated--particularly that of Stalingrad--tended to irritate those military figures whose wartime careers were thus slighted, ignored, or falsified. Therefore, despite the promotion of his own favourites within the military, Khrushchev came to be opposed by a set of military commanders who resented his tamperings with the past. This, combined with other political errors such as his tinkerings with the form of the Party structure, the reduction of the military budget, the emphasis upon certain heavy industries at the expense of others, and failures in foreign policy, all led to a gradual deterioration in Khrushchev's position. By irritating too many diverse groups simultaneously, he had provided a common ground for cliques which otherwise had nothing in common, a *faux pas* which cost him his position.

While there exists no evidence that the military played an active role in the removal of Khrushchev, it is equally evident that there was not an attempt by it, in the style of 1957, to maintain Khrushchev in his office. Clearly, then, with the fall of Khrushchev there would be an attempt to refurbish the luster of the military hierarchy which had been so dimmed during the Khrushchev era. That the battle for

Moscow would be in the forefront of this refurbishment was obvious, for here the dominance of the role of *Stavka* had been so evident that little attempt had been made in the Khrushchev period to distort the battle. Rather, it had been ignored or else treated as a preliminary adjunct to the truly significant struggles at Stalingrad and Kursk. The issue which was left to be decided by the new regime was the limits which would be placed upon the new discussions of the battle for Moscow.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BREZHNEV/KOSYGIN YEARS

(1964 to the Present)

"He who wants to hide
from the reflected substance of events
Beware the mirrors,
do not look at them:
They are able to reveal everything.
You cannot withdraw from the evidence.
Mirrors
remember everthing.
They may fall
from the walls,
But from the splinters--
No one escapes
No one--
No matter who he may be."

Simon Kirsanov, "Mirrors",
1967.

Since the removal of Khrushchev, there have been two distinct features evident in Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow, and, indeed, in Soviet histories of the Great Patriotic War as a whole.[1] The first of these features was evidenced during the initial years of the new leadership, primarily the the publication of a large number of memoirs by leading military figures, memoirs which were designed to redress the errors of the histories of the war written in the Khrushchev period. The emphasis place under Khrushchev on the role of the Front and field commanders at the expense of the Supreme High Command combined with the slighting of the battle for Moscow in favor of the battle for Stalingrad had been two issues which had irritated many military men, and it was to these issues which they naturally turned after Khrushchev's ouster. The second feature of the histories published since Brezhnev and Kosygin succeeded Khrushchev as the supreme political authority in the Soviet Union has been the result of a move towards a re-stabilization of the foundations of Soviet society, foundations which had been rocked by the revelations of the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 and by subsequent account of the misdeeds of the past. This latter move in Soviet histories was based on an attempt to strengthen the position of the new regime by emphasizing the continuity of Party rule since the October Revolution, an emphasis which meant portraying Stalin as the representative of the

[1]The best basic discussion of the topic of the military historiography in this period can be found in the fine introduction to Serwyn Bialer, ed., *Stalin and His Generals, Soviet Military Memoirs of World War II*, (New York: Pegasus, 1969), pp. 28-44. (Hereafter cited as *Stalin and His Generals*).

Party and not as the ogre and tyrant which Khrushchev had claimed. Therefore, the second feature of post-Khrushchev histories of the Great Patriotic War and especially of the battle for Moscow was a rehabilitation of Stalin's military reputation and an increased emphasis on the early portions of the war and Stalin's tremendous efforts to organize the Soviet Union in the face of the German invasion. The two features which characterized Soviet military histories, the move by the *Stavka* to reclaim the credit for the victories unjustly claimed by Khrushchev and his clique and the efforts of the new Party leadership to refurbish Stalin's tarnished military reputation, were in no way inimicable, for those military figures who supported the former trend in an attempt to rescue their military reputations from the depredations of the Khrushchev period were also, in general, conservative men who tended to support the new regime in its attempts to create a history which emphasized the positive rather than the negative aspects of the past as long as the Party was willing to allow some credit for victory in the Great Patriotic War to fall upon the Supreme High Command.

The immediate response of the new leadership upon its coming to power was to soothe the irritations amongst the military which Khrushchev had caused and which had led to the military's acquiescence in his removal.[2] There was a denunciation of Khrushchev's "hare-brained" schemes, coupled with a return to an emphasis upon heavy industry, an admission that budget cuts in the armed forces were mistaken[3], the return of the

[2]See Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, "The Soviet Army as a Political Force", *Problems of the People of the USSR*, XXV (Autumn, 1965), pp. 33-35, for a discussion of the immediate policy changes of the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime.

[3]There was a five per cent increase in military spending in the

moderate Marshal M.V. Zakharov as Chief of Staff upon the death of S.S. Biriuzov, the promotion of the anti-Khrushchev faction within the Army, and the rehabilitation once again of Marshal Zhukov. Along with these changes was a denunciation of Khrushchev's meddling in military strategy. With regard to this latter point, for example, in February, 1965, Marshal Zakharov remarked that

> With the appearance of nuclear-Missile weapons, cybernetics, electronics, and computers, a subjective approach to military problems, hare-brained planning and superficiality may be very expensive and may do irreparable harm . . . . In a scientific milieu, there can be no place for workers, who in trying to give weight to their superficial and primitive judgements, resort to referring to the so-called "iron logic of military thought" and "strategic far-sightedness", sometimes even of someone who had no direct connection with military strategy.[4]

Having satisfied the military's discontent over Khrushchev's policies by wuch pronouncements, there was a similar effort to allow a re-evaluation of the history of the battle for Moscow which had been neglected and subordinated to the events of the latter part of the war and especially to the battle of Stalingrad during Khrushchev's tenure as First Party Secretary.

However, due to the fact that there had not yet been time for the

1966 budget and a further eight per cent rise in 1967. See further in Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Military Policy Trends Under the Brezhnev/Kosygin Regime* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1967), pp. 3-5. This same aspect is dicussed in Alfred L. Monks, "Evaluation of Soviet Military Thinking", *Military Review*, LI, No. 3 (1971), p. 92, where he argues that military debate was greatest in 1965 when the budget was tight and competition among the various branches of the Soviet military for funding was fierce and that debate lessened with higher overall military spending in subsequent years.

[4]Marshal N.V. Sakharov, *Krasnaia zvezda*, February 4, 1965, as translated in John Erikson, "Detente, Deterrence, and 'Military Superiority': A Soviet Dilemma", *World Today*, (August, 1965), p. 343.

new regime to implement changes in interpretation, the first major histroical work on the Great Patriotic War which appeared following the fall of Khrushchev, the single-volume version of the lengthy *History of the Great Patriotic War*, treated the battle for Moscow in a fashion scarcely different from that of the Khrushchev era.[5] Despite this, it is necessary to examine this version of the battle for it provides the standard against which the changes of the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime can be measured.

The evaluation of the battle for Moscow in the *Short History* was the same as that found in the earlier work in almost all primary features. The situation in September, 1941, was characterized by shortages of tanks, artillery, automatic weapons, and aircraft among the Soviet forces.[6] The German successes in October, during the first stage of their advance, code named Typoon, were due to this Soviet deficiency in *materiel* plus the tremendous German numerical superiority which at times exceeded a ration of 3:1.[7] Again, the battles at Briansk and Viaz'ma were hailed as important Soviet defensive measures designed to give sufficient time for the defences at Moscow to be readied.[8] The defence of Moscow itself, and in particular the reaction of the populace to the German menace, was presented in a very straightforward fashion. The

[5]P.N. Pospelov, chief ed., *Velikaia otechestvennaia voina sovetskogo soiuza, 1941-1945. Kratkaia istoriia* (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945. A Short History) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965). (Hereafter cited as *Short History*).

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 112.

[7]*Ibid.*, P. 113.

[8]*Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

emphasis was placed on two features: the tremendous achievement of the Party and Party organizations in readying the citizens and mobilizing the city fully for the war effort and the universally heroic attitude of the Moscovites in the face of adversity.[9] There was, quite naturally, no mention either of the defeatism or of the looting which took place in Moscow during the middle of October

In addition, the discussion of the purely military aspects of the battle itself was guided by the previous Soviet contention that the efforts of the Soviet Union, and not the weather or German errors, decided the outcome of the struggle. By the end of October, according to the *Short History*, the Front had stabilized due to the counterblows of the Red Army, not because of the *rasputitsa*,[10] and the Germans hurried to reinforce and regroup in the first two weeks of November, a hurry attributed to ". . . the imminence of the severe Russian winter, the first hint of which could be seen in the light frost and early snow which had already occurred."[11] Despite this reference to the influence of the winter, it was made perfectly clear that his did not imply that the winter was in any way the decisive factor in the battle for Moscow.[12]

The German advance, from November 15 to December 5, according to the *Short History*, was comprised of some 51 divisions which gave the

[9]See *ibid.*, pp. 115 and 118-19.

[10]Literally, "the breaking up of the roads," a phenomenon of the fall and spring in the Soviet Union caused by the effect of rains and thaws on dirt roads.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 120.

[12]*Ibid.*, p. 141.

German forces a decided numerical advantage in troops, tanks, and guns.[13] As a result of these superiorities, the Germans enjoyed some successes; however, by December 5 Soviet reinforcements, combined with the fact that the Germans had taken heavy casualties, resulted in the Soviets achieving near parity in the numbers of troops.[14] This factor, combined with the numerical advantage possessed by the Soviets in aircraft and tanks, set the stage for the counterblows beginning December 5 and 6, 1941.[15] These counterblows, the credit for which was assigned to *Stavka* by the *Short History*, had several significant results.[16] First, according to the *Short History*, some 150,000 square kilometers were freed from German rule along with nearly five million people. Second, the counterblows resulted in the dextruction of fifty German divisions which necessitated the transfer of German troops from Western Europe to the East. Finally, the counterblows represented the first German defeat in World War II and, as such, were of great psychological import.

Similarly, the results and lessons which could be gleaned from the battle for Moscow as found in the *Short History* were, for the most part, a compendium of prior Soviet claims advanced as early as the battle itself. The victory, in a general sense, was seen as due to the

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 122. The German advantage was set at 1.5 times in tanks, 2 times in troops, and 2.5 times in guns.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 126 The Germans' losses for the period November 16 to December 5 were given as 55,000 dead, 100,000 wounded and missing, 777 tanks, and 297 guns.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 127 The Soviet superiority was set as 1.4 times in tanks, 1.5 times in aircraft, but the Germans were sid to still enjoy a 1.1 times advantage in troops.

[16] The crediting of *Stavka*is in *ibid.*, p. 127, while the results of the battle are in *ibid.*, pp. 140-41.

intrinsic superiority of the Soviet society as led by the CPSU, but there were also other factors which influenced the result. German planners who had envisioned a lightning war had underestimated the tenacity and capacity to resist of the heroic Soviet people and the valiant Red Army.[17] As a result of the Soveit victory, the *Short History* stated, there was an improvement in the morale of the Soviet people and of those in occupied Europe along with a concommitant drop in the spirits of the German troops. In addition, the victory at Moscow ended the myth of the invincible German army and spelled the end of the German plan for a six-month campaign in Russia. As well, the defeat gave the strategic initiative to the Soviet forces for the first time since the beginning of the war. Finially, in the view of the *Short History*, the battle had important international repercussions as it aided the Allies' effort on other fronts and acted as a deterrent which prevented Japan and Turkey from becoming involved in the European struggle.[18]

From the point of view of a historiographic analysis, and considering the leadership change which had just occurred in the Soviet Union, the most interesting aspect of the *Short History* was its treatment of the question of leadership in the battle of Moscow. The two dominant figures in any examination of this battle must be those of the supreme commander, Stalin, and the commander of the West Front, Zhukov. In the *Short History*, however, these two figures were generally ignored. Zhukov was mentioned only in passing as being appointed head of the

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[18] See *ibid.*, pp. 141-143 for the summation of the results of the battle for Moscow.

West Front in October, while Stalin was cited only as chief of GKO and for his speech in Red Square on November 7, 1941. It was obvious that in this new regime where Zhukov was again to be rehabilitated and where the excesses of the de-Stalinization which occurred in Khrushchev's time were to be corrected, that such an approach to the battle of Moscow as that expressed in the *Short History* could not last.

In fact, the new approach to history which did emerge following the ouster of Khrushchev first became evident in the second part of 1965 and continued throughout the following several years. Freed of the constraints of the Khrushchev era and luxuriating in the increased prominence enjoyed by the military under the new government, there was an unparalleled production of memoirs, anthologies, and monographs designed for public consumption on all phases of the war, including the battle for Moscow.[19] Perhaps the two most significant of these were two anthologies published in 1966 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the battle for Moscow.[20] From accounts such as these, for the first time, emerged some insights into the behind-the-scenes actions which accompanied the decision-making processes during the battle for Moscow-- an area previously not mentioned in any Soviet accounts of the battle-- as well as anecdotes concerning and historical opinions on the battle by its leading participants.

[19]An excellent bibliography of these, particularly of the memoir materials, can be found in Bialer, *Stalin and His Generals*, pp. 641-44.

[20]These two collections were A.M. Sansanov ed., *Proval gitlerovskogo nastupleniia na Moskvu* (Failure of the Hitlerite Blows at Moscow) (Moscow: Nauka, 1966) and A.A. Dobrodomov ed., *Bitva za Moskvu* (Battle for Moscow) (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1966). These two works include articles by nearly every significant military figure concerned with the

One of these memoir accounts, that of K.F. Telegin (a member of the military soviet of the Moscow Military District during the battle for Moscow and thus privy to the inner workings of all high-level planning during the conflict), threw new light on the situation which existed during the opening days of Typhoon.[21] Despite the previous official historical line that all Fronts had been warned of and had prepared for the German offensive, Telegin stated that little attention was paid to intelligense sent to the *Stavka* by the Front commanders. On October 5, Telegin himself received information from aerial reconnaissance of the magnitude of the German advance but stated that ". . . it seemd impossible that *Stavka* could not know of an enemy penetration so deep behind our lines--nearly 100-120 kilomemters--and I hesitated to report such an occurrence."[22] This incident reflected two features of the Soviet command at this period, its poor internal communications and the atmosphere of caution and fead which pervaded the attitudes of many Soviet commanders with respect to higher authority. Even when Telegin summoned sufficient courage to report the German advance, he was accused of panic-mongering, perhaps justifying his earlier reluctance to report such an event.[23] This clearly illustrated the communication problem which existed at the

battle as well as others by prominent civilian figures. Many of the articles in the two collections were selected from certain journals, especially *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, although all were edited for the sake of continuity.

[21] K.F. Telegin, *"Moskvoi--frontovoi gorod"*, (Moscow--Front Town) *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 9 (1966), pp. 99-113.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 103

[23] *Ibid.*

beginning of the battle for Moscow, a defect which was eased somewhat when, on October 10, Zhukov was appointed commander of the West Front. As Telegin noted:

> From that time [October 10] military command of the defence of the far reaches of the approach to the capital was focused in the hands of one man. This could only serve to improve the situation.[24]

While this is certainly only faint praise for Zhukov personally, it pointed out Telegin's approval of the formation of a unified command system for the defence of Moscow. Contained in Telegin's short account were several important revisions of and additions to the existing explanations of the battle for Moscow. First, it exposed the unpreparedness of the Soviet forces in October and the failure of the Supreme High Command to react decisively to the German advance; second, it revealed the cautious attitudes prevalent in the Soviet officer corps towards the higher echelons of the Soviet command system; and third, it credited Zhukov for subsequent improvements in the functioning of the Red Army at Moscow.

Even more interesting than Telegin's account was Zhukov's own reminiscences of the events of October through February, as found in his contribution to the collection, *Bitva za Moskvu*.[25] Zhukov told of flying to Moscow from Leningrad at Stalin's behest on October 7, 1941, where he was met at the airport by Stalin himself. Stalin then told Zhukov to go to West Front headquarters and evaluate the situation there personally, as Stalin could not give him any information due to a lack of reliable

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[25] G.K. Zhukov, "*Vospominaniia komanduiushchego frontom*", (Reminiscences of Front Command) in A.A. Dobrodomov ed., *Bitva za Moskvu*, pp. 55-89.

reports.[26] It was interesting to note that Stalin had to issue explicit orders to allow Zhukov to examine the maps of the area, a reflection of the unnecessary secrecy which existed in the Soviet military, even in time of emergency.[27] When Zhukov arrived at the West Front, according to his reminiscences, the situation was so chaotic that he was unable even to locate the headquarters of the Soviet forces. In his analysis of the reasons for the German successes of early October, Zhukov was critical of the Soviet military leadership of the West Front, particularly that of his predecessor Marshal Konev. Konev had been lax, stated Zhukov, in not preparing more effectively for the September German advance, especially in his failure to prepare anti-tank defences. Also, Zhukov felt that in light of the warnings of the German advance which Konev had received that he should have obtained better local intelligence reports of German concentrations in order to situate his own forces properly.[28]

This interpretation of the early failures of the battle for Moscow by Zhukov did not go unchallenged; Konev in his own account of the encounter attempted to rebut the allegations of his personal culpability.[29] Konev claimed that the German successes were due to the fact that they had the strategic initiative, superior numbers, control of the air, and superior mobility. In addition, he felt the West Front was undersupplied;

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 56

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 57

[29] I.S. Konev, *"Nachalo Moskovskoi bitvy"*, (Beginning of the Battle for Moscow), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 10 (1966), as translated in Bialer, *Stalin and His Generals*, pp. 282-84.

but that, despite these problems, the situation at Viaz'ma could have geen salvaged except for the fact that the Germans turned the left flank of his forces from the south. Konev further stated that it was he, in light of the disasters of early October, who had advised Stalin to merge the West and Reserve Fronts and to appoint Zhukov as commander with himself as first deputy. This interpretation does not agree at all either with Zhukov's account of the same event or with the known facts of Konev's personality. Zhukov's version of his appointment to command was that Stalin asked him to take over command of the West Front from Konev and only Zhukov's intercession on Konev's behalf allowed the latter to remain on in any capacity.[30]

Zhukov's account also expanded upon the previous account of the battles for Briansk and Viaz'ma and the subsequent decision to retreat to the Mozhaisk line. According to Zhukov, he decided that the retreat to Mozhaisk was necessary upon his first examination of the situation on October 8, although it must be wondered, in the absence of any corroboratory evidence, whether or not this conclusion was arrived at later with the benefit of hindsight, and so informed Stalin.[31] While Zhukov did not view Briansk and Viaz'ma as victories, as had been the case in previous Soviet histories, he felt that they were essential in allowing the orderly retreat to the Mozhaisk line. As Zhukov noted, "thanks to their [the forces at Viaz'ma] doggedness and bravery, the enemy's forces were delayed in the critical days. We gained valuable time in which to organize the

[30]Zhukov, *Vospominaniia frontom"*, p. 61

[31]*Ibid.*, p. 57.

defences at the Mozhaisk line."[32]

The issue of the civilian panic in Moscow also was mentioned by Zhukov, the first time that this had been openly discussed in Soviet histories. Zhukov straight-forwardly mentioned the fact that in Moscow there were a few ". . . cowards, panic-mongers, and defeatists. . ."[33] who had to be quelled by a declaration of a state of siege in Moscow. However, he immediately went on to praise the heroic efforts of the Moscovites for their aid to the Front. Zhukov also disputed those Western historians who claim that the *rasputitsa* caused the German advance to end late in October. He stated that only fools would have expected perfect weather conditions and if the Germans did so it only reflected to their discredit. Besides, as he pointed out, the citizens of Moscow travelled through the mud repeatedly to help with the building of the defence works of the capital.[34]

Immediately prior to the German advance of mid-November, Zhukov related an incident which gave several insights into his relationship with Stalin. On November 13, Stalin telephoned Zhukov to order a counterattack against the Germans. When Zhukov protested that he lacked the forces necessary for this attack, Stalin made it clear that the issue was not open to discussion.[35] This tends to rebut the claims advanced by certain other Soviet military memoirs that Zhukov dominated

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 73

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 68

Stalin during the battle for Moscow,[36] a claim which does not seem consistent with any report of Stalin's character.[37] From Zhukov's account it is clear that Stalin took a very active role in all aspects of Soviet military planning during the battle for Moscow and was not the figurehead that was implied in the Khrushchev era. The refutation of such claims does not imply, however, that Stalin remained constantly aloof from the advice given to him by Zhukov; late in November when the German advance appeared most dangerous, Stalin actively sought Zhukov's opinion as to whether or not Moscow could be held.[38] Indeed, after the failure of the Soviet counteroffensive of the winter of 1941-1942 which had been initiated by Stalin against the advice of *Stavka*,[39] Stalin interfered much less with the planning of military operations. What

[36]See P.A. Belov, *Za Nami Moskva* (For Our Moscow) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), pp. 42-54, for a suggestion that Zhukov cowed Stalin during the battle for Moscow.

[37]Perhaps the best account of the battle in Western literature is Albert Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow 1941-1942* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd., 1973). Seaton, p. 188, rejects Belov's claim as an outright falsification, albeit for unknown reasons. Marshal K.K. Rokossovski's complaint, found in "*Na volokolamskom napravlenii*", (At the Volokosamsk Attack) *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 11 (1966), pp. 296-98, that Zhukov countermanded decisions made by Stalin himself can be explained by examining Zhukov's account of that same period where he stated that he was in constant contact with Stalin and with Chief of Staff B.M. Shaposhnikov at the same time as Rokossovskii was appealing Zhukov's orders. It seems likely, therefore, that Stalin was aware of and approved of Zhukov's countermanding of Shaposhnikov's previous order to Rokossovskii. The stiff tone of Zhukov's not to Rokossovskii, warning the latter never again to attempt to go over Zhukov's head, was undoubtedly prompted by Zhukov's desire to prevent any further attempts by subordinates to circumvent his command.

[38]Zhukov, "*V ospominaniia frontom*", p. 70.

[39]Marshal A. Eremenko, *The Arduous Beginning*, trans. V. Schneirson, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), p. 273, noted that Stalin's plan was premature and opposed by *Stavka*.

can be concluded, however, concerning the battle for Moscow, was that while Stalin consulted his military commanders there was no doubt as to who made the final decisions.

Zhukov's analysis of the reasons for the failure of the German advance on Moscow was also rather interesting. Zhukov acknowledged that much of what had already been said, presumably in earlier Soviet and not Western commentaries on the battle although this was not stated explicitly, concerning the battle was correct, but that as the commander of the Soviet forces at Moscow he wished to add his opinions. According to Zhukov, the failure of Typhoon stemmed from the German understimation of the resiliency of the Red Army, the German failure to make more use of combined forces to prevent the isolation of the *Panzers*, the lack of a German attack on the centre of the West Front which allowed the transfer of Soviet forces to the beleagured Soviet wings, the improvement in Soviet reconnaissance and staff work which resulted in Red Army forces being concentrated in the right spots, the improvement in the discipline of the Red Army, and the October 19 decree of a state of siege which strengthened the will of civilians and troops.[40] Zhukov's view of the battle was one of the first Soviet interpretations to go beyond the bounds of the limited analyses provided in the six-volume history. Zhukov's contention that the German lack of combined arms and failure to advance on the centre of the West Front were important factors in the Soviet victory was the first time that Soviet histories had discussed such specific things as military factors when outlining the reasons for the Soviet victory at Moscow.

[40]Zhukov, *"V ospominaniia frontam"*, p. 70.

Certain other controversial aspects of the battle for Moscow also were revealed more clearly by the memoirs of the immediate postwar period. The German contention that their drive on Moscow was finally blunted by the arrival of veteran, winter-equipped troops from Siberia was refuted by Marshal F.I. Golikov's article recalling the rapid formation of the 10th Reserve Army in the Soviet rear during the months of October and November.[41] According to Golikov, the reinforcements which the Germans encountered were composed primarily of fresh levies like those trained by Golikov and of troops taken from other areas of the Soviet command. Also very intriguing was Zhukov's account of the counterblows launched at Moscow during the period of December 5-6. Zhukov firmly debunked any remnants of the theory that the counterblows were in any way part of a preconceived plan of defence. Instead, he emphasized the essential spontaneity of the action, noting that "until the end of November, there was no plan created for a counteroffensive either by *Stavka* or by the Army groups [Fronts], especially by the Western army group [Front] which was deployed directly in front of Moscow."[42] According to Zhukov, it was only in the course of his discussions with Stalin late in November and early in December, that there was any mention of the launching of a general counterattack on the West Front, and that a contingency plan for such a possibility was created by the Front command. This plan was then sent to Stalin and, on December 2, after

[41]F.I. Golikov, *"Rezervnaia armiia gotovitsia k zashchite stolitsy"*, (Reserve Army Readies for the Defence of the Capital), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 5 (1966), as translated in Bialer, *Stalin and His Generals*, pp. 311-18.

[42]Zhukov, *"V vospominaniia frontom"*, p. 78.

careful questioning of Zhukov by Stalin to determine whether or not the time was ripe for a limited attack, Stalin endorsed the plan.

By the end of 1966, the debt owed by Brezhnev and Kosygin to the military for its acquiescence in the ouster of Khrushchev had been paid. The omissions and errors introduced by Khrushchev's tinkerings with the historical accounts of the Great Patriotic War had been supplanted by the new memoir material published by those military figures who, like Zhukov, had fallen into disfavor during Khrushchev's tenure or by others who had bided their time until the political situation seemed more propitious. But these new revelations had also gone far beyond the mere redress of the errors of the Khrushchev period. In general, the memoirs provided much information concerning the decision-making processes of the Soveit command, an area which previously had not been discussed in Soviet histories of the war and particularly those of the battle for Mscow. In terms of the actual facts of the battle, there was little information of a novel sort in the new accounts. For example, while Golikov's article revealed more about the actual mecanisms of the creation of reserve armies, it added nothing to the previously expressed Soviet contention that large-scale use of the reserves had been decisive at Moscow. Basically, then, the new facts which were revealed in the memoirs were only more detailed elaborations of previously made statements.

However, in certain other areas, the new memoirs proved invaluable. First, they provided an interesting contrast to the memoirs published by the German commanders at the battle for Moscow. The juxtaposition of these two complementary sets of information and opinion

allowed, for the first time, serious comparisons of the validity of both sides' arguments. Here, of course, the Soviet authors had somewhat of an advantage, for the long period of delay in their publishing gave them an opportunity to examine the memoirs of their German counterparts and thus rebut more fully. The second, and most significant area in which the memoirs supplanted previous Soviet histories was in their evaluation of Stalin as a leader during the days of the battle for Moscow. The picture which emerged was a rather balanced one; Stalin was not the supreme generalissimo of the period from 1945 to 1953 nor was he the incompetent figure who planned his strategies on a globe as was put forward in Khrushchev's time. An example of this balanced approach was contained in Zhukov's evaluation of Stalin. In answering his own rhetorical question of "Where was Stalin during the battle for Moscow?", Zhukov stated:

> Stalin was in Moscow, organizing troops and supplies for the destruction of the enemy at the capital. He must be given credit. Utilizing the GKO, the members of *Stavka*, and the creative leadership of the collective People's commissariats, he performed a tremendous task in organizing the strategic reserves and the material and technical aspects needed for the war. Through his severe exactitude one may say that he achieved the near impossible. . . . he paid attention to advice, but, unfortunately, sometimes made decisions not appropriate to the situation . . . .[43]

This evaluation reflected the debt which Zhukov recognized he owed Stalin for the latter's great achievement in organizing the Soviet rear, but also reflected the irritation of the professional military man with the interference of a civilian in the miliatry sphere.

In order to examine the emergence of the second primary feature

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

of recent Soveit historiography and to assess its impact on the writing of Soviet military memoirs and on the history of the battle for Moscow, it is necessary to return to an earlier point in time. The second feature of post-Khrushchev histories was the move away from the excesses of de-Stalinization which followed the Twentieth Party Congress and the emphasis and accentuation of the positive aspects of Soviet history under Stalin. While this was done supposedly to provide inspiration for Soviet citizens, in reality there were far more concrete and political motives behind this new approach. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin had had certain consequences which proved to be counterproductive to the present Soviet regime. First, the massive criticism of Stalin had had a grave impact on Soviet society, for, when criticism of Stalin was permitted, this attitude tended to extend into general questioning of Soviet society which the Party felt should not be sanctioned any longer. Also, to question Stalin was to question nearly thirty years of the history of the Soviet Union and of the Party, a move certain to raise embarassing points of fact. Consequently, in foreign affairs, the attack on Stalin had tended to weaken the infallible image which the Party fought to maintain, and this rendered Soviet control of Eastern Europe much less firm.

In total, then, the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime needed to repair the damage done to the reputation of the Party and the Party leadership which the Twentieth Congress had caused both at home and abroad. One means of doing so was by having historical works emphasize the positive, constructive aspects of the Stalinist past. As the Great Patriotic War ranked, along with the October Revolution, as one of the great achieve-

ments, of Soviet society and was connected intimately with the Stalinist state, it was only natural that this new trend should become evident in military history.

One of the earliest manifestations of this new trend was given by Marshals Konev and Bagramian who, in the spring of 1965, called for a "just historical evaluation" of Stalin's wartime activites.[44] At a slightly later date, in January of 1966, *Pravda* called for the elimination of the ". . . un-Marxist phrase [describing the Stalin era as] the period of the cult of personality" which over-emphasized the negative aspects of Stalinist rule.[45] This clear-cut warning that the new Soviet regime would not tolerate the continued attacks on the Stalinist past was given further emphasis by the bringing to trial, in February 1966, of two well-known Soviet dissident writers, Andrei Siniavsky and Yuli Daniel, who had been arrested some five months previously. The Twenty-third Party Congress, held in March and April of that same year, also tended to reinforce the swing to neo-Stalinism, as the new trend came to be called. Despite this, however, as one writer had noted, ". . . the satisfaction the XXiii Congress granted the Stalinists was mainly symbolic . . . "[46], and the real shift in Soviet military history to rehabilitate Stalin's record as a war leader was not evidenced fully until the summer of 1966.

[44] *Literaturnaia gazeta*, April 17, 1965, as cited in Abraham Rothberg, *The Heirs of Stalin, Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-1970*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 161

[45] *Pravda*, January 30, 1966

[46] Donald W. Treadgold, *Twentieth Century Russia* (3rd ed.: Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972), p. 487.

For, it was that point of time which marked the sharp return to an official policy exonerating Stalin to a great extent for the Soviet failures at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. This return was indicated by the denunciation of the work by the Soviet historian A.M. Nekritch, *22 June, 1941.*[47] Nekritch's book had been very critical of Stalin for his failure to prepare the Soviet Union adequately and had received favorable reviews when it was first published in 1965. But, by 1966, Nekritch's book had become unacceptable in the face of the new policy to rehabilitate Stalin, and hence Nekritch was stripped of his Party membership and his book became no longer available to the Soviet public. In September of 1967, then, G.A. Deborin and B.S. Tel'pukhovskii published a review of Nekritch's book which was designed more to serve as a directive to other historians than as an examination of the work. Nekritch was taken to task primarily for his ". . . departure from class positions, and subjectivism in the evaluation of social phenomena . . . " which resulted in his cutting ". . . himself off from a fully scientific examination of historical laws which were demonstrated with special force in the war days."[48] It was clear that the history of the Great Patriotic War had again returned to center stage in Soviet ideological drama and that the principal character was again to be Stalin. Now that Brezhnev and Kosygin had disharged their debt to the

[47]Nekritch's work is available in translation complete with valuable notes, the transcript of the meeting of the Division of History of the Institue of Marxism-Leninism discussing the work, and a translation of G.A. Deborin and B.S. Tel'!ukhovskii's review from *V oprosy istorii KPSS* attacking the work in Vladimir Petrov, *"June 22, 1941", Soviet Historians and the German Invasion* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1968).

[48]*Ibid.*, pp. 293 and 283.

military for the latter's help in the removal of Khrushchev by permitting the publication of the military memoirs which restored the military's prestige, the new leadership turned to the strengthening of their own position. This involved the rehabilitation of Stalin's reputation as a war leader; and Nekritch's disgrace, combined with the earlier call in *Pravda* for greater objectivity in military memoirs towards Stalin was a clear signal of the new approach.[49] In addition to this move in the realm of military history, the Party attempted, much as had Khrushchev after the removal of Zhukov, to strenthen its control over the military, a control which had been weakened by the need of Brezhnev and Kosygin to maintain the support of the Army subsequent to Khrushchev's fall. This was easily seen in an article in *Krasnaia zvezda* in 1967, which stated that ". . . attempts to prove that in modern war the political leadership has possibly lost its role have been decisively refuted by logic."[50]

By the beginning of 1968 it was evident that there was a change underway in the content of Soviet military histories. The crackdown on the dissident writers like Daniel, Siniavsky and Solzhenitsyn was paralelled in Party directives concerning the history of the Great Patriotic War.[51] Unlike the changes of the Khrushchev era which were designed to

[49]See Thomas B. Larson, "What Happened to Stalin", *Problems of Communism*, No. 18 (March-April, 1967), p. 89.

[50]V. Zemskov, *Krasnaia zvezda*, January 5, 1967, as cited in Roman Kolkowicz, "Interest Groups in Soviet Politics: The case of the Military", *Comparative Politics*, II, No. 3, (1970), p. 460.

[51]For the clash of Solzhenitsyn and the Soviet authorities in 1967, see "Solzhenitsyn and *Glavlit*", in Rothberg, *The Heirs*, pp. 192-203.

shift the credit for the achievements during the war to Khrushchev, these new machinations were designed to eliminate the torrents of criticism of Stalin which had been initiated by the Twentieth Party Congress and had continued throughout the Khrushchev years. The new emphasis was to be on the positive results of Stalin's actions, plus the deletion of any unfavourable referrences to the former leader. By means of this improvement of Stalin's public image, the new regime hoped to eliminate the dissidence--both internal, stemming from the writers who persisted in attacking the Soviet state through thinly veiled allegories on the Stalinist past--and external, from those of the socialist states of Eastern Europe who had interpreted the increased artistic and intellectual freedom within the Soviet Union as a sign that they might now claim greater political autonomy.

The final evidence that the Soviet Union was no longer willing to tolerate such independent action came in 1968. At the plenary sessions of the Central Committee held in mid-April, Brezhnev made two statements which had ominous portents. First, he announced that the sessions "reflected apprehension over unrest in Poland, political reform in Czechoslovakia, and dissidence among Soviet intellectuals", and went on to add that the "consequences of the personality cult" were now finished.[52] On August 21, 1968, these words were backed by vigorous action when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia, clearly indicating that further attempts at independence would be met by similar means. As Soviet apologist Alexander Werth wrote, the Czech

[52]L. Brezhnev at the plenary sessions of the Central Committee, April 19 and 20, 1968, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 236.

liberalization fulfilled

> . . . that "incredible" demand Alexander Solzhenitsyn had made in the case of the Soviet Union in his famous letter to the Writers' Congress in May, 1967. To the Kremlin bureaucrats and those of the Moscow Writers' Union, Dubcek was simply the international equivalent of Solzhenitsyn.[53]

The Soviet answer to this request was clear: such demands would be met by forceful means.

The new decrees did not of course end the continuing evaluation of Soviet military historiography within the Soviet Union, but the new limitations on the criticism of Stalin were quickly evident. The histories published by the military, however, for the most part tended not to praise Stalin for his actions during the war but, instead, merely omitted making any unfavourable comments concerning him. For example, in an excellent bibliographic and historiographic review of the literature published hitherto on the Great Patriotic War, a discussion of the influences on Soviet military writings published during the war ignored the effect which Stalin had had on these accounts by his refusal to permit certain aspects of the war to be analyzed in depth.[54] As the article noted:

> The character of war-historical works in the period of the war were influenced in some specific aspects. On the one hand, it was necessary to make some quick generalizations experimentally, in the interest of utilizing them in the war. On the other hand, in the sweep, depth, and resul-

[53]Alexander Werth, *Russia: Hopes and Fears* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), p. 332

[54]A. Grylev, *"Sovetskaia voennaia istoriografiia v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny i poslevoennyi period,"* (Soviet War Historiography During the Years of the Great Patriotic War and Postwar Period) *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, Nos. 1 and 3 (1968), pp. 90-100 and 77-89.

> tant scientific-investigative work in the province of military history a highly noticable narrowness of approach resulted . . . . [55]

Similarly, while the impact of the Twentieth Party Congress on the writing of history was mentioned, as "a new stage in the development of Soviet historical science . . . .[which] warned against subjectivism in history . . .", there was no mentioned that this warning against subjectivism referred in any way to Stalin, as he was not mentioned either by name or by position.[56]

The new approach was quickly evident in discussions of the battle for Moscow. A series of articles in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* dealing with the failure of Typhoon by a Colonel V. Kravtsov did not mention Stalin at all, and focused instead on an examination of the numerical and quantitative aspects of the battle.[57] The significance of the battle was discussed only in general terms. It was achieved against great odds, it ended the German plan of "lightning war", and it was one of the most important factors in the German defeat in the Second World War.[58] The major reason given by Kravtsov for the German defeat was the fact that the Soviet Union was able to mobilize all the resources of the nation due to the superiority of the socialist system and the efforts of the CPSU.[59] Thus, the new approach as evidenced in

[55] *Ibid.*, No. 1, p. 93.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[57] Colonel V. Kravtsov, *"Krakh nemetsko-fashistskogo plan 'Barbarossa',"* (Destruction of the German-fascist plan "Barbarossa") *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, Nos. 11 and 12 (1968), pp. 36-48 and 36-45.

[58] *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 36.

military publications had elements of both the Stalinist and Khrushchevite histories of the battle for Moscow. Like the Stalinist accounts, the new approach did not criticize Stalin for the failures of the Soviet forces before Moscow and like the accounts of the Khrushchev era, the new histories tended to emphasize the latter portions of the war when the Soviet forces were generally victorious.

In the new Party-inspired accounts of the Great Patriotic War and, indeed, in histories dealing with the Stalinist period in general, the new regime was not satisfied with only the cessation of attacks on Stalin, as now was current in histories written by the military, but demanded active praise of Stalin. For example, an article in *Voprosy istorii* discussed the purges of the 'thirties in a fashion which tended to justify Stalin's stand.[60] As well, Stalin was largely exonerated of the responsibility for the failure to prepare the Soviet Union for the invasion of 1941. In an article in the Party journal, *Kommunist*, it was advanced that Stalin was quite correct to doubt the reliability of the reports which indicated that invasion was imminent and that he had, in any case, prepared for the eventuality of attack as well as could be expected.[61] A stern warning also was issued in *Kommunist* concerning the undesirability of any examination of Stalin from a negative point of view, and particularly against the use of the provisions of the Twentieth Party Congress concerning the "cult of personality" as a guise

[60] D. L. Golinkov, *"Razgrom ochagov vnutrennei kontrrevoliutsii v Sovetskoi Rossii,"* (Destruction of the Internal Breeding Ground of Counterrevolution in Soviet Russia) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 2 (1968), pp. 148-65

[61] V. Khvostov and A. Grylev, *"Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,"* (On the Eve of the Great Patriotic War) *Kommunist*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 56-71.

for attacking Stalin. This article, entitled "For Leninist *Partiinost'* in the Treatment of the History of the CPSU," stated "the point of view on this question [the cult of personality] is shown in exhaustive clarity in the well-known account found in the resolve of the Central Committee of the CPSU of June 30, 1956, 'Concerning the Overcoming of the Cult of Personality and its Consequences'";[62] a statement designed to eliminate further discussion of the questions of Stalin and Stalinism.[63]

Neither was the area of memoir history overlooked by the regime. A lengthy, favourable review of military memoirs in *Kommunist* gave particular credit to the positive aspects of Stalin's wartime activities found therein, thus emphasizing that the Party was not opposed to military memoirs which maintained the correct ideological attitude.[64] This was evident with the publishing, in 1969, of Zhukov's complete memoirs, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia.*[65] In his chapter on the battle of Moscow, Zhukov reiterated the opinions he had expressed earlier in his contribution to *Bitva za Moskvu.* However, there were certain fascinating deletions which illustrated the compliance of the military with the

[62]V. Golikov, S. Murashow, I. Chkhikvishvili, N. Shatagin, and S. Shaumin, *"Za leninskuiu partiinost' v osveshchenii istorii KPSS,"* (For Leninist *Partiinost'* in the Treatment of the History of the CPSU) *Kommunist,* No. 3 (1969), p. 73.

[63]A good examination of this problem can be found in Robert M. Slusser, "A Soviet Historian Evaluates Stalin's Role in History," *American Historical Review,* LXXVII, No. 5 (December, 1972), pp. 1389-98.

[64]See Ye. Boltin, *"Volnuiushchie stranitsy letopisi Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny,"* (Stirring Pages in the Chronicle of the Great Patriotic War) *Kommunist,* No. 2 (1969), pp. 119-28.

[65]G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia* (Reminiscences and Reflections) (Moscow: Novosty Publishing House, 1969).

present regime's new attitude towards Stalin. First, there was an omission of the passage citing the need for Stalin to give a specific order to Shaposhnikov to permit Zhukov to examine the maps of the West Front and second, in Zhukov's evaluation of Stalin there was omitted the criticism of Stalin for his interference in military affairs.[66] Instead, Zhukov's evaluation was now positively laudatory. As Zhukov wrote,

> I am often asked about Stalin's role in the battle for Moscow. Stalin was in Moscow, in control of the troops and weapons, preparing the enemy's defeat. He must be given credit for the enormous work in organizing necessary strategic, material and technical resources which he did as head of the State Committee for Defence with the help of the executive staff of the People's Commissariat. With strictness and exactingness Stalin achieved the near-impossible.[67]

Thus, while there was the deletion of any criticism of Stalin, Zhukov's memoirs still included referrences to Stalin's great efforts in the early stages of the war.

It was clear that the new image of Stalin which the Party wished to present in connection with his actions during the defence of Moscow was that of wise elder statesman who was firmly in command but listened to his subordinates and made his decisions in consultation with his colleagues.[68] In Zhukov's memoirs, Stalin told Zhukov on October 10 that "General Headquarters has decided to appoint you commander of the West

[66]Compare *ibid.*, p. 345 with Zhukov, *"Vospominaniia frontom,"* p. 89.

[67]Compare Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia*, p. 390 and Zhukov, *"Vospominaniia frontom,"* p. 89.

[68]For example, in *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia*, p. 347, Zhukov advised Stalin to withdraw all forces to the Mozhaisk line, a recommendation which Stalin accepted.

Front", whereas in his earlier account Zhukov had stated that his appointment had been Stalin's personal decision.[69] This image of Stalin was furthered by fictional accounts of the war. In Iuri Bondarev's novel, *Burning Snow*, the hero, General Besonov, was waiting in an anteroom to meet Stalin. His thoughts were described as follows:

> Besonov too was silent, becoming increasingly aware of a strange, overwhelming sensation of being dissolved in the dead silence, a feeling of his own insignificance at the thought that somewhere close by, perhaps in the next room was Stalin, that any minute the door would open and here, into the reception room, would come the man whose countenance had imprinted itself into his mind more firmly, more indelibly than the faces of his dead father and mother.[70]

Clearly, this was not the Stalin of the Khrushchev era, the Stalin who was responsible for the failure of the Soviet forces prior to the battle for Moscow.

The new interpretation of the battle for Moscow emerged explicitly in the revised edition of the *Short History* published in 1970.[71] In the new edition, Stalin's role was given a greater prominance than in the first edition. In discussing Stalin's speech of November 7, 1941, this second version quoted verbatim from the speech, which the first volume did not do, and also quoted Zhukov's evaluation of the effect which the speech had had on the Soviet people.[72] As Zhukov

[69]Compare *ibid.*, p. 352 with Zhukov, *"Vospominaniia frontom,"* p. 61.

[70]As translated in Lily Daetz, "The Portrayal of War in the Latest Soviet Literature," *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR*, XVIII, No. 10 (October, 1971), p. 40.

[71]P. N. Pospelov, chief ed. *Velikaia otechestvennaia voina sovetskogo soiuza, 1941-1945. Kratkaia istoriia* (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945. Short History) (2nd ed.: Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970).

[72]See *ibid.*, p. 123 and compare with the first edition, p. 121.

wrote in his recent memoirs,

> This [Stalin's speech] even played a tremendous role in further strengthening the morale of the Army, the Soviet people and had a great importance for the international scene. Stalin's speech was a renewed force in showing the confidence of the Party and government in the defeat of the enemy.[73]

The Party did not require, however, that all credit for the victory be given to the CPSU and to Stalin, as shown in the article published contemporaneously in the prestigious *Voprosy istorii* by Marshal A. M. Vasilevskii.[74]

In this latter account, Vasilevskii was generous with the credit for the Soviet victory. He gave large measures of praise to all the organizations involved in the war.

> We, the older generation of Soviet officers . . . . witnessed the tremendous work done by GKO, witnessed the unbelievable efforts of the Politburo of the Central Committee and of GKO in fulfilling tasks in directing critical areas of the munitions industry, transport and agriculture . . . .[75]

However, he also went to add that in considering the question of leadership,

> In speaking of this, it is necessary to emphasize the role of *Stavka* during the entire war . . . headed from July 10, 1941, by Stalin.
>
> In giving strategic leadership to the military struggle, *Stavka* was not bound by stereotypes, but looked for and utilized the methods most appropriate to each circumstance.[76]

Vasilevskii's evaluation of Stalin and his assessment of the amount of

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] Marshal A. M. Vasilevskii, *"K voprosy o rukovodstve vooruzhennoi bor'boi v velikoi Otechestvennoi voine,"* (On the Question of the Leadership of the Armed Struggle in the Great Patriotic War) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 5 (1970), pp. 49-72.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Ibid., pp. 51-52.

credit to be assigned to him were also part of the new *modus vivendi* between the military and the Party. As had Zhukov before him, Vasilevskii gave a large measure of credit to Stalin for his efforts in organizing the rear in the battle for Moscow, but he, far more than had Zhukov, praised Stalin's military attributes.

> The Commander-in-Chief, without a doubt, played a leading and directing role in the activity of *Stavka* during the war. He had great intelligence, iron will, and an astounding memory, and was able to see his path clear in complicated military problems.[77]

This same kind of praise for Stalin's military attributes and of his contribution to *Stavka's* performance was found as well in General S. M. Shtemenko's account of the functioning of the Soviet General Staff during the war.[78] Obviously, the Party was willing to share the credit for the victory at Moscow with *Stavka* and the rest of the military as long as Stalin was provided with a past suitable for him to remain as a respectable precursor of the present regime.

This new approach was mirrored in other, Party and civilian evaluations of the battle. There was even a return to portions of the Stalinist military evaluation of the battle for Moscow. Most noticeably, there was a renewal of the use of the terms active defence and the strategic counteroffensive, terms which had not had currency since 1956. In an article in *Voprosy istorii*, the battle for Moscow was evaluated as

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[78] General S. M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War, 1941-1945*, trans. by Robert Daglish (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), pp. 51-55, noted Stalin's attempts to re-organize *Stavka* in the spring of 1942 in the light of the experiences at Moscow and his support of the military against ineffectual or incompetent commissars who used their position only to criticize the military commanders.

follows:

> The switch of the Red Army from the strategic defensive to the strategic counteroffensive was the most significant change in the war. The Soviet nation and its Army, under the direction of the Party, had overcome the most difficult problem in the struggle with fascist aggression: the Hitlerite war plan, at the base of which lay the "blitzkrieg", was ended . . . .[79]

Other Party accounts of the battle for Moscow tended to be similarly simplistic, returning to the kind of approach which typified the Stalin period. For example, in an account entitled *Results and Lessons of the Great Patriotic War*, the authors (G. A. Deborin and B. S. Tel'pukhovskii, authors of the stinging attack on A. M. Nekritch in 1968.) presented such a simplistic overall analysis of the war.[80] According to them,

> as a result of the great organizational efforts of the Communist Party and the heroism displayed by the Soviet people at the Front and in the rear, the military and the political plans of Hitlerite Germany had already failed in the first months of the war.[81]

Also, each of the initial Soviet defeats was presented as giving *Stavka* time to mobilize and form new Armies in the rear and to evacuate industry to the East. According to this account, as a result of the Soviet victory at Moscow, the Soviet forces gained the initiative, ended the myth of the invincible German army, and lowered the morale of the Germans while lifting that of the Soviet Union and her Allies. In addition, the

[79] Iu. P. Petrov, *"KPSS--organizator i rukovodutel' pobedi sovetskogo naroda v Velikoi otechestvennoi voine,"* (CPSU--Organizor and Commander of the Victories of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War) *Voprosy istorii*, No. 5 (1970), p. 19.

[80] See G. A. Deborin and B. S. Tel'pukhovskii, *Itogi i uroki Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Results and Lessons of the Great Patriotic War) (Moscow: Mysle, 1970), especially pp. 55-62.

[81] *Ibid*, p. 55.

victory kept Turkey and Japan out of the conflict.[82] This work also went on to criticize Western accounts for their improper evaluation of the battle and concluded that "the victory at Moscow was above all the victory of Soviet society and government and of the politics of the Communist Party and the Soviet government, the victory of the Soviet people and of their armed forces."[83]

Even the account of the battle published on the thirtieth anniversary of the battle for Moscow by Marshal Zhukov himself tended to follow a rather ritualistic approach to the battle.[84] Zhukov's new account abandoned the novel, purely military proposals for the German defeat which he had advanced in his previous works. Instead, he offered an account which was similar to those superficial analyses found in other contemporary efforts. The early German successes were said to be a result of the fact the German economy was on a war footing, that the German army had two years of combat experience, and that Germany had satellite armies and economies to aid her.[85] The blitzkrieg was stopped by the heroic Soviet forces, the mobilizing and organizational efforts of the CPSU, the partisans, the ". . . gigantic efforts of the Soviet people to give maximum aid to the Front . . .", and the nature of Soviet society.[86] According to Zhukov, the results of the battle for

[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[84] G. K. Zhukov, *"Bitva pod Moskvoi,"* (Battle for Moscow) *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, Nos. 10 and 12 (1971), pp. 58-68 and pp. 44-52.

[85] *Ibid.*, No. 10, pp. 58-59.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Moscow were that the Red Army gained the strategic initiative and inflected the first defeat of World War II on the German forces, causing the end of the German plan of "lightning war".[87] Zhukov's account was so typical of the most recent Soviet accounts of the battle for Moscow that it contained at least one phrase which was identical to one from a work published five years earlier, a fact which makes it suspect that Zhukov may not have written this latest article or else was forcing his own views into a mould provided by the Party.[88] Thus it would seem that even the most forceful and prestigious member of those who had opportunity to know the realities of the battle for Moscow firsthand has been co-opted or intimidated by the new regime into accepting the Party's new interpretation of the event.

Clearly, then, during the period from 1964 to the present there have existed two overlapping approaches to the battle for Moscow in Soviet histories, each due to changing political situations which have existed in the Soviet Union. The first of these approaches, as represented by the early memoirs of leading military figures who were involved in the battle, presented the battle in a new light and revealed many facets of the battle previously undiscussed. As well, these accounts, in endeavoring to correct the slanders of the Khrushchev era, provided a balanced evaluation of the role of Stalin in the battle for

[87] *Ibid.*, No. 12, p. 49.

[88] Compare *ibid.*, "the most important result of the battle for Moscow was the serious defeat inflicted on the larges group of the German-fascist forces--Army Group Centre . . .", with the identical phrase in Colonel D. Muriev, *Proval Operatsii "Tyfun"* (The Failure of Operation "Typhoon") (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966), p. 249.

Moscow, a kind of evaluation which previously had been lacking in Soviet works. The second approach, which featured an emphasis on the role of the Party in the battle and a highlighting of the positive aspects of Stalin's actions, began slightly later than the first trend, but came to dominate in the years after 1968 and has continued to predominate to the present. This second view represented a compromise between the military and the Party, a compromise which maintained the prestige of the former and, at the same time, neatly dovetailed with the Party's desire to suppress political dissidence by providing it with an acceptable predecessor by making Stalin once again one of the key figures in the greatest Soviet achievement of more recent times, victory in the Great Patriotic War. As one writer has neatly put it, the new approach has satisfied both the memorialist and the Party, for "the generals have reclaimed their laurels and no longer have to listen to Khrushchev's stories; [while] the Party leadership has provided itself with a respectable Stalin who presents them with no awkward questions . . .".[89] With such a situation, and with the passage of time which makes the battle for Moscow less of an emotional issue and which has taken its natural toll of many of the leading participants in the battle, it would seem that the battle for Moscow has found itself a comfortable niche in Soviet military history. Barring some unforeseen requirement of politics, such as a return to the attitude of virulent de-Stalinization which followed the Twentieth Party Congress, chances for further major changes in the historical interpretation of the battle for Moscow seem slight.

[89]James Douglas, "Stalin in the Second World War," *Survey*, XVII, No. 4 (Autumn, 1971), p. 187.

CONCLUSION

THE BATTLE OF MOSCOW AS A FUNCTION OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY

Hamlet: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Polonius: By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Hamlet: Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius: It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet: Or like a whale?

Polonius: Very like a whale.

William Shakespeare, "Hamlet",
Act III, Scene ii

"'Soviet historians,' remarked an *émigré* who was once one of them, 'would prefer not to be harlots. It is the system that makes them so.'"[1] This laconic statement serves as a fitting introduction to the problem of evaluating the reasons for and the motives behind the changes which had been manifested in the Sobiet interpretations of the battle for Moscow during the past thirty years. History in the Soviet Union is written with didactic intent and, therefore, changes in political policy are reflected and even foreshadowed by changes in the historical interpretation of key events in Soviet history.

An examination of the historiographical trends in the battle for Moscow indicates that here is an exemplar extraordinaire to the tendency in the Soveit Union for politics to influence the writing of history. The accounts of the battle are composed of two distinct parts, that which can be called the factual and that which can be called the interpretative. These two elements, both of which have been influenced at one time or another by political considerations but in differing degrees, combine to present an interesting study of the influence which politics in the Soviet Union and the exigencies of the moment can have upon the interpretation of an event.

Common to all the Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow are a set of preconceptions which stem naturally from the Soviet system itself and are not influenced by changes in the leadership or by the fluctuating world situation. Fundamental to these preconceptions is the

[1]Ramsdell Gurney Jr., "Clio Compromised: Soviet Historians on the U.S.A. and American Historians on the USSR", *The Georgia Review*, XXVII, No. 4 (Winter, 1973), p. 530.

Soviet view that the battle for Moscow was won by the actions of the Soviet people and armed forces under the overall aegis of the CPSU. Therefore the contention, often raised by Western historians, that the Germans lost the battle due to their own mistakes has been unacceptable to Soviet historians under all regimes, past and present. From this divergence in world view springs the dichotomy evident between Soviet and Western historians, but these differences are teleological rather than political and cannot be discussed here.

It is possible, however, to correlate the changes evidenced in various Soviet histories of the battle for Moscow with specific occurrences in the political situation within the Soviet Union, and to show why these modifications of the historical record had become necessary. The Stalinist period of the historiography of the battle for Moscow was characterized by two distinct features. The first of these existed during the first portion of the war itself. Associated with this feature was a tendency in Soviet war publications to emphasize the partnership of the regime and the Soviet people, the fact that the Soviet regime was reacting as best it could to the perfidious German attack, and the assurance that victory would be forthcoming to the Soviet Union and her Allies. The reasoning behind these emphases was simple and direct. All efforts must be made to unite the people against the German invaders if the state were to survive, and no better way to do this could be found than to give the Soviet citizens a stake in the outcome by stressing the aspect of partnership in the Soviet government's defensive efforts. Equally obvious was the rationale for the putting forward of the ideas that the Soviet Union was reacting to a surprise German attack

and that eventual Soviet victory was a foregone conclusion.

The insistence that the Soviet Union was acting in response to an unprovoked German attack gave the Party a convenient excuse for the failures of the early part of the war. If the Party claimed to have prepared in advance for the eventuallity of invasion, then it would have left itself open to criticism for its poor showing. Finally, the expression of certitude in the final victory of the Soviet Union with the help of her Allies was caused by the obvious psychological need to deny the possibility of defeat and by the hope that this reference to Allied aid would ensure a continuance of the supplies which were so vital to the Soviet war effort.

The second feature of the Stalinist interpretation of the battle for Moscow grew apace with the frequency of Soviet victories after the battle of Moscow and dominated the few postwar Soviet histories which dealt with it. This later approach was based on a belief in the myths of active defence and of the strategic counteroffensive, on an acceptance of the leadership of Stalin as the decisive military factor in the war, and on an endorsement of the importance of the five "permanently operating factors" of Stalinist military science in all wars. These changes from the more objective view espoused prior to the battle for Moscow when the German peril for the Soviet Union was most acute, were prompted by several things, including the need to restore the infallibility of the Party in all matters, the need to maintain Stalin's personal control of the Soviet Union, and a relectance to admit that the Soviet Union had required any aid in the war.

Therefore, the complementary concepts of active defence and the

strategic counteroffensive provided a reasonable explanation of the early Soviet defeats by presenting them not as defeats but as preconceived holding actions and as part of a grand design to destroy the German aggressors. The underscoring of Stalin's leadership in a military sense was designed to lessen the hold which some of the military, particularly Zhukov, had gained on the public mind for their exploits in the war. Such a move, combined with the demotion of many key military figures after the war, was aimed at preventing anyone from gaining enough personal prestige and hence potential political power to threaten Stalin's own position. The insistence on the universality of the five "permanently operating factors" was also explained by Stalin's desire to present himself as a military authority while at the same time denigrating the analyses of foreign experts of the battle for Moscow.

During the period of political flux immediately following the death of Stalin, there was little change in the interpretation of the battle for Moscow in the light of the uncertain political guidelines which existed. However, there were certain practical considerations which made change certain. Stalin's cavalier treatment of the military, along with his refusal to examine new strategical concepts necessitated by the nuclear watershed in weapons technology, led to an immediate attack upon his interpretation of the battle for Moscow. These accounts, it was claimed, failed to credit the military for its efforts in the struggle and had portrayed the military advantage gained by the surprise tactics of the Germans as temporary and unimportant. Such charges, spearheaded by the military, were given great impetus by the events of the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956.

The Twentieth Party Congress was the most important event in changing the history of the battle for Moscow and, indeed, in changing the course of postwar Soviet historiography in general. Khrushchev's attempt to seat himself on the throne more firmly by attacking his immediate predecessor resulted in far-ranging consequences for the Soviet polity. For, by vilifying Stalin, Khrushchev had unleashed the pent-up forces of dissent which had gathered in Stalin's long reign. Consequently under the guise of correcting the faults of the "cult of personality", historians and the military took this opportunity to present a more objective account of the battle for Moscow and the events leading up to it. This was prompted by the historians' desire for a greater professional integrity and more latitude in the examination of key historical events, while the military hoped to regain the prestige which they had been denied under Stalin, as well as to re-establish their authority in the creation of military strategy.

However, Khrushchev was not interested in redressing the errors of the Stalin period for the same reasons as those motivating either the historians or the military. He, too, had a stake in the Great Patriotic War and he was determined to present a history of the war which would emphasize his own role and that of his favorites. As Khrushchev's services in the war were concerned mainly with the actions in the Ukraine and later at Stalingrad, and since his favorites were those who served with him at these Fronts, there arose a new school of history in the Soviet Union, the "Stalingrad school". This new school resulted in a decreased emphasis on the battle for Moscow, as this battle was directed almost entirely by members of *Stavka* and did not involve either Khrush-

chev or his cronies. The reasons for this emphasis on Khrushchev's own actions in the war are evident. Only in the Great Patriotic War could Khrushchev hope to establish any legitimate claim to the mantle of leadership separate from his longtime association with Stalin, and therefore it was necessary to accentuate both his role in the war and the significance of this role in order to increase his own prestige.

Khrushchev's insistence on this approach to the history of the war, combined with championing of rockets and atomic weapons as the necessities of military supremacy, gained him many enemies within the military hierarchy. Consequently by this course of action, despite the promotion of this own friends within the military structure, Khrushchev alienated sufficient of the military to preclude a reoccurrence of the military support which had played such a vital role in his retaining power in 1957. Thus, stripped of military support, Khrushchev was unable to defeat the forces which combined to oust him as Party First Secretary in 1964.

Since the removal of Khrushchev, there have been two evident changes in the accounts of the battle for Moscow. The first of these was caused by the debt owed to the military by the new regime for the former's aid in their accession to power and was distinguished by the appearance of memoirs written by the leading military figures of the battle. These memoirs were designed to correct the inequities propagated during the Khrushchev era through a re-examination of the early portion of the war and by a return to an emphasis on the role of *Stavka* as compared to that of Front and field commanders. These accounts presented a balanced picture of Stalin, in sharp contrast to the vituperative

attacks of the Khrushchev period. Hoever, even these balanced evaluations of Stalin became unsuitable for the new policies devised by the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime and were themselves eventually replaced.

It appeared that Khrushchev's attacks on Stalin and Stalinism at the Twentieth Party Congress had had unpredicted and unwelcome side effects. The wave of reform which had accompanied de-Stalinization had served to produce currents within the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, which had undermined the authority of the Party. In Khrushchev's own time this had been evidenced by the Hungarian uprising, and in the post-Khrushchev era, Brezhnev and Kosygin were determined not to permit another such occurrence. Therefore, it was necessary to rehabilitate Stalin's image in order to prevent a gradual erosion in the influence of the Party both at home and abroad. In addition, as Brezhnev and Koxygin had even less legitimate clain to supreme power in the Soviet Union than had had Khrushchev, it was therefore imperative that they present themselves as the latest in a line of rulers who held their power by the authority of the Party. This, in turn, meant that Stalin and the Party would have to be associated more closely in the record of such events as the battle of Moscow and therefore that any criticism of Stalin was no longer acceptable.

In the light of this new situation, by 1968 it was necessary that the balanced accounts of Stalin as a war leader in the battle for Moscow be replaced by works which praised the former Party chief. This new trend seems not to have offended the military, for memoirs published subsequent to this decision have given handsome and willing praise to Stalin, whereas if the military were dispeased with the situation, these

works would only have made obvious gestures toward the new Party historical line. This would not seem illogical, for most of the military figures concerned were rather conservative men who objected to the new liberalism within the Soviet Union, and to the greater freedom enjoyed by the Soviet Union's East European allies. Also, as the Party has chosen to share the credit for the victory at Moscow with the Army, the Army has in turn proven willing to provide the Party with an acceptable predecessaor in the person of Stalin.

It is evident that the history of the battle for Moscow has occupied an important place in the historiography of the Great Patriotic War, due to its connection with the early defeats suffered by the Soviet Union and to the fact that the responsibility for these defeats can redound upon Stalin in his role of Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet military forces. It is equally clear that his history has been manipulated for pragmatic political reasons by the two groups which were most closely connected with the battle, the military and the Party. It is important to note that quite often the aims of these two groups have not been coincident and that the push and pull between the two has resulted in a greater latitude for the history of the battle for Moscow than would have otherwise resulted. In fact, as a result of the critical position of the battle for Moscow in the war, its record has a greater diversity in interpretation than any other event of similar importance in Soviet history.

The give and take between the Party and the military has, according to one writer, taken on a cyclical nature.

One of the most interesting aspects of the "cyclical" pattern

> is the fact that, in almost every case, the deterioration of relations between the two groups followed upon a period when the Party was exceptionally dependent on the support of the military . . . . Its temporary need of the military caused the Party to relax some of its controls . . . . This usually led to great self-assertiveness on the part of the military, which in turn worried the Party as foreshadowing an emancipation from its political controls that could prove a threat to its dominant position in the state.[2]

While this fluctuation has had its reflection in the writing of the history of the battle for Moscow, this doen not indicate that cooperation between the Party and the military is impossible, as the example of the last few years of the Brezhnex/Kosygin regimen has proved. As long as the Party is willing to accept the military as an essential and integral part of the ruling circle, as the elevation of Marshal Grechko to membership in the Politburo would seem to indiacte, the military is happy to cooperate with the Party in editing its version of military history.

Finally, the historiography of the battle for Moscow provides valuable evidence for the hypothesis that Soviet military history represents a "microcosm in a macrocosm", reflecting in miniature the larger aspects of the Soviet polity. The changes manifested in the treatment of the battle for Moscow over the past thirty years have each had their causes in the larger workings of the Soviet political framework has had its concommitant influence upon the interpretations of the battle for Moscow in Soviet histories.

[2]Roman Kolkowicz, *Soviet Party-Military Relations: Contained Conflict* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1966), pp. 40-41.

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